GEORGE CANNING AND HIS TIMES

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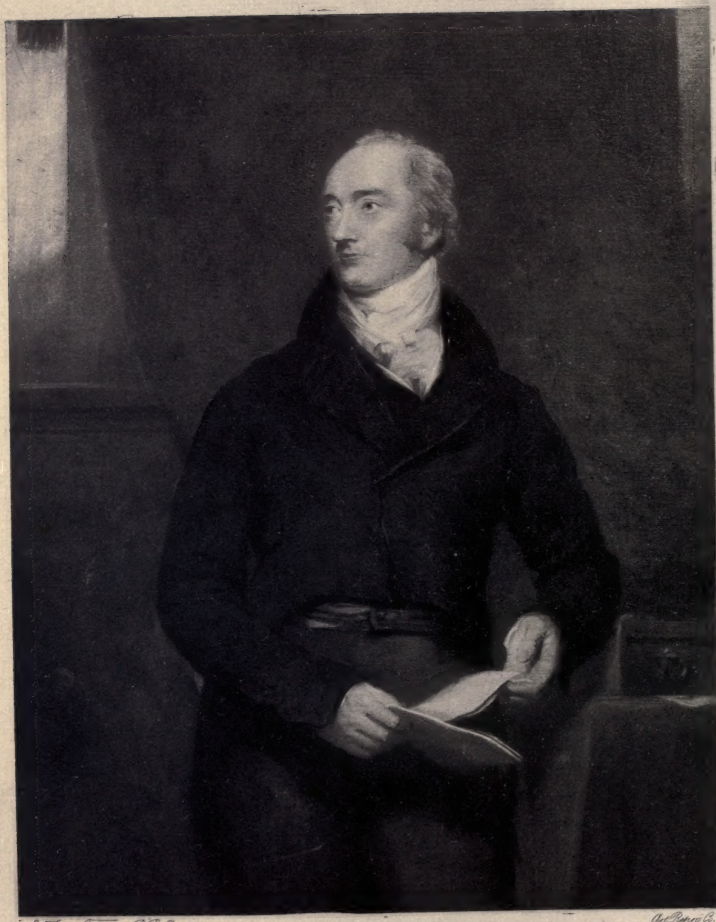
AND HIS TIMES



Sr Thos Lawrence P.R.A. pinxt. Art Repro Co.

The Right Hon. George Canning

From the portrait in Christ Church, Oxford.

GEORGE CANNING
AND HIS TIMES
A POLITICAL STUDY

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PREFATORY NOTE.

I DESIRE that these pages should be read less as a biography of Canning than as an "appreciation" of his policy, and particularly of his foreign policy. They contain a transcription and expansion of the notes of a lecture delivered at Cambridge, and I have not always been careful to eliminate, though I have not striven to preserve, the original lecture form.

The scope of this little book forbids regular references, but I have mentioned in the text or in notes most of the authorities to whom I am specially indebted. For the earlier part of Canning's career the Malmesbury Papers, the Grenville Memoirs, and certain Reports of the Historical MSS. Commission are the most valuable of the original authorities; for the later the Wellington Despatches contain a mine of wealth.

My warm thanks are due to my friends, Mr. Arthur Hassall, of Christ Church, and Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, of New College, for kindly

reading the proofs, and for several valuable suggestions; to the Governing Body of Christ Church for permission to reproduce Sir Thomas Lawrence's portrait of Canning; and to Mr. Murray for the interesting information, never before made public, as to Canning's connection with the *Quarterly Review*.

J. A. R. MARRIOTT.

Worcester College, Oxford.
December, 1902.

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GEORGE CANNING AND HIS TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

In the history of English statesmanship, Canning occupies a place which is peculiar, if not unique. In sheer intellectual ability he has had, by general consent, few, if any, superiors. But some critics would none the less demur to his being admitted to that select first-class to which Walpole and Chatham, Pitt and Peel, indisputably belong. He has some affinities of temper and of gifts with the Carterets and Shelburnes, to whom Disraeli, in the brilliant political dissertation prefixed to 'Sybil,' refers as "the suppressed characters of History." But his positive achievements were incomparably beyond theirs. His position in regard to the Tory party was not unlike that of Henry S. John, Lord Bolingbroke, and of Disraeli himself; for he must certainly be accounted as among its most eminent "educators. Bolingbroke, of course, can claim a place in the

history of English literature, to which Canning has no pretensions. 'The Oracle' and 'The Anti-Jacobin' were brilliant *jeux d'esprit*, but even in the domain of satire they have no special distinction, whereas Bolingbroke's contribution to the development of English prose is inferior only to that of Dryden. As a statesman, on the other hand, Canning is as much above Bolingbroke as he is below him as a man of letters. But of all the statesmen I have named, with the exception of the "suppressed characters," Canning has received least attention from historical critics. Augustus Stapleton, his friend and Private Secretary, devoted four bulky volumes to the memory of his chief. This work remains, and will remain, the principal authority for Canning's political career; but it is a pious monument rather than a critical biography. Canning is the subject of one of Brougham's short sketches, and he figures as "the Brilliant Man" in Sir H. Lytton Bulwer's 'Historical Characters.' His 'Speeches' were published in six volumes, edited by Therry in 1828, and short biographies have since appeared at long intervals.* In the standard works on the nineteenth century—notably in Sir Spencer Walpole's admirable 'History'—Canning's figure, of course, looms large; and there are innumerable references to him in the

* One by Mr. Robert Bell in 1846, another by Mr. F. H. Hill in 1887.

'Lives' of his contemporaries, in those of Lord Castlereagh, Lord Liverpool, Spencer Perceval, Lord Eldon, and others; and in the Memoirs and Diaries of Lord Malmesbury, Charles Greville, Lord Colchester, John Wilson Croker, and William Wilberforce. But of Canning himself no biography, at once adequate in scale and critical in tone, exists.

In this, as in many other respects, Fate has been singularly wayward in its dealings with Canning. His rise to political fame was almost as rapid as that of the younger Pitt, and far more remarkable. The son of a disinherited father and a penniless mother; without means; practically without connections; unaided save by a brilliant reputation acquired at Eton and Christ Church, he was brought into the House of Commons as soon as he left Oxford, and became an Under-Secretary at six-and-twenty. His wife brought him £100,000 and an assured position in society; he was indisputably the ablest of Pitt's lieutenants, and perhaps the greatest Foreign Secretary of the nineteenth century. But, despite his great position and his magnificent abilities, despite his brilliant oratory and his skill in diplomacy, Canning never fully enjoyed the confidence of his contemporaries, and in the estimation of posterity occupies a place which is, I venture to think, far below his real deserts.

Is there any satisfactory explanation of this? His career, undoubtedly, is full of paradoxes, his character is full of contradictions; and about both there hangs a certain haze of mystery which historical criticism has not yet penetrated. But no attentive readers of the memoirs and papers of his contemporaries can fail to be struck by the fact that, be the explanation what it may, Canning was never entirely liked or trusted even by men of his own party. Many of them — perhaps most of them — preferred Castlereagh's leadership to that of Canning, and some of them (including the Sovereign) even preferred Addington's. Perceval attained to the first place in the Party twenty years before him; Lord Liverpool excluded him from it for fifteen. Not one of these men could compare with him in abilities, and none of them were more fortunate in their opportunities. But they were more liked and less mistrusted. Conscious—perhaps over-conscious—of his own abilities, and supremely impatient of stupidity in others, Canning never learnt the first lesson essential to one who aspires to lead a Party—to suffer fools gladly. Irritable in temper and curiously devoid of tact, he impeded his own advancement by over-anxiety and unwillingness to bide his time. Worst of all, he got the reputation, deserved or not, of not "running straight," of faithlessness to colleagues, and a fondness for intrigue. "It is Canning's

misfortune," said John Wilson Croker, "that nobody will believe that he can take his tea without a stratagem." "By an unhappy perversion of mind," writes a Quarterly Reviewer, "he would always rather have obtained his end by a crooked path than a straight one." "Canning," said a third, "can never be a gentleman for more than three hours at a time." However exaggerated and even untrue these statements may be, they serve partially to account for Canning's unpopularity with his colleagues and his contemporaries generally.

But there were other reasons. There is nothing so fatal to success in the House of Commons as a reputation for exceptional intellectual brilliancy. In a free lance, sparkling wit is not merely tolerated but demanded. But on the Treasury bench the "Marshalls and Snelgroves" inspire more confidence. Both with tongue and pen Canning's wit was too nimble to be popular. No one knew whose turn would come next. "He rarely," it was said, "delivers an important speech without making an enemy for life." Since he could not be dull, men thought him superficial; and, as often happens, mistook intellectual wit for levity of character. His own conduct, it must be confessed, not infrequently gave weight to these imputations. Diplomacy is a game, but it has to be played with an attempt at seriousness. Canning, however, was from

first to last incorrigible. His despatch to Sir Charles Bagot, our Ambassador at the Hague, has often been quoted as an instance in point. The crisis was an acute one, and the despatch was in cypher. With infinite pains the *attachés* unravelled it thus :

> "Dear Bagot, in commerce the fault of the Dutch
> Is giving too little and asking too much ;
> So since on this policy Mynheer seems bent,
> We'll clap on his vessels just 20 per cent."

But although Canning was only half trusted and even less liked by contemporaries, his place in the history of English statesmanship is, as I shall attempt to show, of exceptional interest and of first-rate importance.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE.

GEORGE CANNING was born in London on April 11th, 1770, the year which marked the definite beginning of that Tory supremacy which was practically unbroken for sixty years. But "though I was accidentally born in London, I consider myself an Irishman." So Canning wrote to Sir Walter Scott in 1825. An Irishman he was, both by temperament and by blood. His father—also George Canning—was the eldest son of Stratford Canning of Garvagh, a property in the County Londonderry, which had been granted to a cadet of the Cannings of Foxcote (Warwick) in the days of James I. The Irish Cannings had the usual fortune of Ulster Protestants in the seventeenth century. They lost a son in the Rebellion of 1641; they were attainted by James II.'s Parliament in 1689, and restored by that of William III. in 1691. Canning's father was the eldest son of the house, but he came over to London in disgrace in 1757, married Mary Anne Costello, a penniless beauty, and having sold his birthright for a mess of

pottage, died on the first anniversary of his son's birth—April 11, 1771. The son of the disgraced and disinherited heir of Garvagh lived to see a peerage bestowed upon the cousin who supplanted him.

Mrs. Canning, with little but her beauty to depend upon, went on the stage, but achieved a very moderate measure of success. She subsequently married an actor named Reddish, and after his death, in a madhouse, she took a third husband, in 1785, in the person of Mr. Hunn, a respectable but stage-struck tradesman at Plymouth. Reddish was an actor of some merit, but personally a dissolute and worthless sot; and it might have gone ill with his step-son but for the kindly intervention of a fellow-actor, Moody. The latter was struck by the bright promise of the lad, and earnestly appealed to an uncle, Stratford Canning, to rescue him from his miserable surroundings. Stratford Canning—a wealthy banker in London—agreed to receive the boy, who was now seven or eight years old, into his home; procured for him an allowance of £200 a year from his Irish relations, and gave him an excellent education. George Canning, it may be added, though more or less separated henceforth from his mother, never ceased to regard her with the most tender devotion and solicitude. He wrote to her, it is said, without fail, every week—even at the busiest periods of

his official career, and as soon as he had earned a pension, begged that it might be settled upon her. Not a few of the most envenomed attacks upon Canning to be found in contemporary satire have reference to this act of filial piety. Mrs. Canning, or Mrs. Hunn, as she ultimately became, lived to be over eighty, and survived her son. That something of her fondness for the footlights descended to the son there seems to be little doubt. Nor can it be denied that the histrionic strain in his temperament weakened his position in the House of Commons. The very finish of his declamation contributed to the impression that Canning was an "actor." "The orator," said Brougham, "never seemed to forget himself and be absorbed in his theme; he was not carried away by his passions, and he carried not his audience along with him. An actor stood before us, a first-rate one, no doubt, but still an actor, and we never forgot that it was a representation we were witnessing, not a real scene."* Brougham's judgment is as unfair as it is characteristic. To many Englishmen, there is no surer sign of intellectual insincerity than technical perfection in the art of oratory.

Thanks to his uncle Stratford and the Irish annuity, Canning had the advantage of a first-rate education. He was sent first to the Hyde Abbey School, Winchester, then kept by a Mr.

* 'Statesmen of George III.' First Series, p. 285.

Richards—a pedagogue who was subsequently rewarded by his distinguished pupil with a prebendal stall at Winchester. Thence he passed to Eton, where his first conspicuous triumphs were won. In the school-games he took no part, but, notwithstanding this, he made many friends, and achieved a remarkable reputation. Sir Spencer Walpole goes so far as to assert that he "was, perhaps, the most distinguished boy ever known at Eton." Be this as it may, it is certain that he became a scholar of real distinction, and impressed masters and boys alike with a sense that he was destined for greatness. One definite, and perhaps unique achievement, stands to his credit as a schoolboy. Together with his friends, John and Robert Smith, and Hookham Frere, he started a school paper, the numbers of which *mirabile dictu* have been frequently reprinted. For its copyright—still greater marvel—a publisher, Mr. Knight, was found willing to pay £50 in hard cash. Canning's contributions to the 'Microcosm' are still read by the curious, and it may safely be said that time might be less profitably and less pleasurably spent. Few schoolboys write so well in the Addisonian style.

From Eton, Canning went to Christ Church, where he matriculated on November 22, 1787. Christ Church was, at that time, ruled by one of the greatest of its deans—Dr. Cyril Jackson—who seems to have been a wise counsellor and

constant friend to Canning. Among other friendships made or confirmed at Oxford were those with Jenkinson (afterwards Lord Liverpool), Lord Holland, Lord Morpeth (afterwards Carlisle), Sturges Bourne, and, above all, Lord Boringdon (afterwards Lord Morley), to whom so much of the correspondence printed by Augustus Stapleton is addressed. For the rest, it may be mentioned that Canning won the Chancellor's Latin Verse in 1789, founded a "Speaking Society" at Christ Church, took his B.A. degree in June, 1791, and his M.A. on July 6, 1794. It is worthy of note that he was so far recognised by his University as among the greatest of her statesman-sons that the honorary D.C.L. was conferred upon him at perhaps the *nadir* of his political fortunes—in 1814. And it is, perhaps, not less significant that the most distinguished of the political clubs among the undergraduates of Oxford still bears his name. Canning left Oxford as he had left Eton, with a unique reputation as "the brilliant man." But to him, as to many Etonians, Oxford meant less than it does to boys from less famous and less favoured schools, and before he had taken his Degree he seems to have been eager to make his plunge into the larger world.

He entered as a student at Lincoln's Inn, but so far from practising at the Bar was never even called to it. From the outset of his career, it

was on political success that his ambition was fixed. It is a common-place to assert that the old close-borough system afforded a better chance to brilliant youngsters without fortune than the open system of to-day. And it is probably true. At any rate, it is certain that many a man who subsequently rose to high office in the State was in this way brought into the House of Commons at four or five and twenty, whereas to-day he would have to plod away at the Bar or in trade for twenty years before he could afford the expense, diminished though it be, of contesting and still more retaining a popular and enfranchised constituency. Whatever his fortune or connections, a young man who left Eton and Oxford with a reputation such as Canning's would not be lost sight of by the party leaders of the day. As a matter of fact, Canning was not entirely without family connection. His uncle, Stratford Canning, was a staunch Whig, and his house was a resort of many of the leaders of the newly-formed Radical wing. With Sheridan and Fox in particular the young George Canning was brought into frequent if not familiar contact, and it seems to have been generally assumed that when he enlisted in the political army it would be under their banner. That a Whig seat was offered to him by the Duke of Portland seems tolerably certain; but the offer, if made, was declined.

Canning was introduced to Pitt, and in 1793 he was brought in for Newport (Isle of Wight) in the Tory interest, and as an avowed supporter of the Government.

There are various indications that this decision was unexpected. As evidence of this, Colonel Fitzpatrick's epigram, often quoted, may be quoted once again:—

> "The turning of coats so common is grown,
> That no man would think to attack it;
> But no case until now was so flagrantly known
> Of a schoolboy turning his jacket."

Sheridan, too, had alluded in a speech in the House of Commons not obscurely and, as events turned out, much too confidently, to Canning as "a young friend of mine, whom I soon hope to hear answering the honourable gentleman" (Jenkinson, Canning's Oxford friend) "who has just distinguished himself: a contemporary whom he knows to possess talents not inferior to his own, but whose principles, I trust, are very different from his." Sheridan spoke in all good nature, but he reckoned without his host. It may be that his words helped to hasten a decision already forming in Canning's mind. Even at three-and-twenty Canning was the last man in the world to allow his hand to be forced; but he seems to have thought it due to Sheridan to call upon him and explain the decision at which he had arrived. Lord Holland was

present at this interesting interview, and told Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer (who tells the story) that "nothing could be more respectful, affectionate, and unreserved than the manner in which the ambitious young politician gave his reasons for the change he was preparing to make or had made; nothing more warm-hearted, unprejudiced, and frank than the veteran orator's reception of his retiring *protegé's* confession: nor, indeed, could Mr. Sheridan help feeling the application when he was himself cited as an example of the haughtiness with which 'the Great Whig Houses' looked down on the lofty aspirations of mere genius." The last words suggest a further and interesting reason for the decision at which Canning had arrived. The Whig party was still under the domination of the "Revolution families." High office was regarded as a monopoly of the Pelhams, Grenvilles, Bentincks, Russells, Cavendishes, and a few other great houses. To enlist under their banner was to court the fate of Burke and Sheridan himself. The Tories offered a more promising opening to a young man of talent and ambition. Canning's irritable temper may have played him false as years went on (notably in 1809), but there was no lack of calculation and circumspection in the initial stages of his career.

In 1793 he entered Parliament as an avowed disciple of Pitt.

CHAPTER III.

PITT'S DISCIPLE.

CANNING'S decision to throw in his lot with the Tory party, though influenced doubtless by personal reasons, was due primarily to broad considerations of public policy. The year 1793 marks a turning-point in Pitt's career, and in English history. On February 1, 1793, the French Republic declared war on England. That declaration closed Pitt's career as a domestic administrator, and compelled him to play a part for which he was not exceptionally qualified. For ten years he had been at the helm of the State—years of ceaseless but congenial activity. He had carried through a series of fiscal reforms which proved him to be the loyal disciple of Adam Smith, and the legitimate successor of Sir Robert Walpole. He had extricated the finances of the country from the confusion in which the American War had involved them, and had placed them on a thoroughly sound footing. He had given to Canada—or rather to the two Canadas—a large instalment of local autonomy; he had assented to the repeal of all

the worst provisions of the penal code in Ireland, and had done his utmost—not without risk to his position in England—to secure for Ireland the advantages of commercial equality with Great Britain. In regard to India he had succeeded where Fox had failed; he had established the "dual system," and had placed the constitutional relations of England and her great Indian dependency on a footing which endured until the Mutiny. His commercial treaties with France and Russia anticipated the work of Huskisson and Cobden and Peel, while his Bill of 1785 proved him to be the first English Minister who, while in office, appreciated the pressing importance of the question of Parliamentary Reform.

But in 1793 the outbreak of war with the French Republic suddenly arrested his work as a domestic reformer, diverted his activities into a less congenial channel, and greatly dimmed his reputation. Pitt's defects as a War Minister have been absurdly exaggerated; but it must be patent to the most superficial critic that for the first ten years of his official life he was immersed in work entirely congenial to himself, and that for the last ten years he was not. How the legend arose that Pitt plunged this country recklessly into war with France it is difficult for a modern critic to understand. It is now obvious, on the contrary, that he hoped against hope that the revolutionary flames would burn

themselves out in France and would not involve Europe in the blaze; and that even when war had broken out on the Continent he struggled hard to keep England a mere spectator. Inflammable materials on both sides the Channel rendered the hope illusory and the struggle fruitless. But it may be confidently said that the great war which ensued was not of Pitt's choosing.

It was the rapid development of events in France which led Canning to separate from his early friends and definitely ally himself with Pitt. His reasons are fully explained in a letter addressed to his friend, Lord Boringdon, and dated December 13, 1792. So long as the French were struggling for Constitutional liberty, Canning's sympathies, like those of most Englishmen, were entirely with them. "I wished most piously and heartily for the total overthrow and destruction of every impediment that should be thrown in the way of their exertions." And the reason is characteristic—a "thorough persuasion that the right of a nation to choose for itself its own constitution is a right which they claim from God and nature alone, and for the exercise of which to God and nature alone they are amenable." It is youthfully and extravagantly put; but the principle was one to which Canning was constant throughout his political career—the right of a nation to determine its own form of government. He confessed also—and a youth

of two-and-twenty may well be forgiven—to "a sort of speculative fondness for the idea of a representative republic;" and a desire to ascertain by the experience of a neighbour, without being at any of the risk or expense of the experiment at home, how far such a form of government would increase or diminish the freedom and happiness of a people." But from this philosophic enthusiasm for abstract republicanism (at a neighbour's expense), he was rudely recalled by the "first use made by France of her emancipation." To set up a republic within her own borders was one thing; to attempt to upset every existing government in Europe, and to promote the "cause of freedom" at the point of the bayonet was another. With a revolutionary crusade Canning had no sort of sympathy, and so it came that he entered the House of Commons as the supporter of Pitt.

During his first Session he wisely held his tongue, but on January 31, 1794, the "great event," as Canning, writing to Lord Boringdon, describes it, took place. This maiden speech was in favour of the subsidy to the king of Sardinia. The text of it can be read in Therry's edition of Canning's speeches. According to Bulwer it was a failure; possessing "in an eminent degree all the ordinary faults of the declamations of clever young men. Its arguments were much too refined; its arrangement much too systematic;

cold, tedious and unparliamentary, it would have been twice as good if it had attempted half as much." The critic expected too much. Canning himself was satisfied: "my success was equal to my most sanguine hopes." It was at any rate sufficient, for in the following Session he was selected to second the address.

Meanwhile the ship of State found itself in stormy waters. The first coalition against France went rapidly to pieces. Prussia had her eyes from the first fixed rather on Poland than on France, and after the accomplishment of the second and third Partitions, came to terms with the French Republic and concluded peace at Basle in 1795. For ten years Prussia ceased to count in European politics. Spain retired from the coalition a few months later, and after a year's interval was compelled to declare war on England. Holland over-run by French troops was transformed into the Batavian Republic, and added another to the Powers with whom we were at war. Howe's great victory in the Channel (June 1, 1794), was the first of many successes at sea; but on the Continent French arms carried everything before them; even Austria was forced to her knees; and by the end of 1797 England was left alone to confront France

At home commercial distress was followed by active political discontent. The financial panic of 1793, alleviated though it was by Pitt's wisdom

and courage, necessarily disorganised trade; successive failures of the harvest caused much distress among the poor; the reckless administration of relief still further accentuated their sufferings; and oil was poured upon the flames by a group of radical incendiaries led by Thomas Hardy, Horne Tooke and others.

Under these critical circumstances Pitt wisely sought to strengthen and to broaden his administration. Some of the leading Whigs accepted office under him; the Duke of Portland took the Home Office; Windham became Secretary at War, and Fitzwilliam went to Ireland. In 1796 Canning was appointed to serve his official apprenticeship under Grenville as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. This early promotion, he owed, of course, to Pitt. The terms on which, even at this time, he stood with the Prime Minister may be inferred from a passing reference in a letter (August 21, 1790); "he (Mr. Pitt) seldom leaves town without giving me such a map of his proceedings as enables me to follow him, whenever I find or can contrive for myself an evening of leisure—an advantage which I seldom fail to take whenever his destination is to Hollwood. I have seen him much there, and for the most part alone, and I think I have never left him without liking him better than before. I could not admire or love him more, even if I had no obligations to him."

During the next few years Canning devoted himself assiduously to his departmental duties, intervening but rarely in the debates in Parliament, and finding his recreation in writing political squibs for *The Anti-Jacobin.*

The first number of this famous "weekly" appeared on November 20, 1797. Despite the critical labour which has been expended of late years upon the subject, it is still impossible to say which of the pieces may with certainty be ascribed to Canning himself, and which to his coadjutors in the enterprise, George Ellis, John Hookham Frere and William Gifford. The last named was chosen by Canning to edit the paper, and contributed certainly to the prose pieces if not to the verse. The object of the whole enterprise was to kill Jacobinism by ridicule and contempt. The main body of the Whigs had gone over with the office-bearers to the side of the Government in 1794, but the left wing, with some fifty adherents in the House of Commons, was still strong in the possession of debaters like Erskine and Sheridan, and, above all, Charles James Fox. Mackintosh was a foeman worthy of Burke's steel, while Godwin and Tom Paine wielded a pen with more than common effectiveness. Despite the debating skill of some of its leaders, the Whig remnant was so shrivelled and discredited in Parliament that, in 1797, it virtually seceded from the House of Commons.

But, powerless in Parliament, the extreme Whigs might still do mischief in the country, and to circumvent this no weapons could be so effective as those of ridicule and satire. Gillray devoted his pencil to the cause, Canning and his friends devoted their pens. "The popular idea of Fox is to this day largely formed," as one of his biographers * has truly said, "upon a vague remembrance of Gillray's caricatures." Coarse, and sometimes even brutal, in conception, they did their work as far as Fox was concerned. To the people he became known as a second Guy Fawkes, ready with the torch of the Rights of Man to blow up the King and the House of Lords; as a traitorous agent anxious to betray London to the French; as a masked headsman preparing for the execution of George III.

Hardly less savage than the caricatures of Gillray is the satire of *The Anti-Jacobin*.

Here, for example, is Canning's burlesque of one of Erskine's perorations supposed to have been delivered at a meeting of The Friends of Freedom at the Crown and Anchor Tavern:

"Mr. Erskine concluded by recapitulating, in a strain of agonising and impressive eloquence, the several more prominent heads of his speech. He had been a soldier and a sailor, and had a son at Winchester School; he had been called by special retainers, during the summer, into many

* Wakeman, p. 180.

different and distant parts of the country—travelling chiefly in post-chaises; he felt himself called upon to declare that his poor faculties were at the service of his country—of the free and enlightened part of it, at least; he stood here as a man; he stood in the eye, indeed in the hand, of God, to whom (in the presence of the company and waiters) he solemnly appealed; he was of noble, perhaps royal, blood; he had a house at Hampstead; was convinced of the necessity of a thorough and radical reform; his pamphlet had gone through thirty editions, skipping alternately the odd and even numbers; he loved the Constitution, to which he would cling and grapple; and he was clothed with the infirmities of man's nature; he would apply to the present French rulers (particularly Barras and Reubel) the words of the poet:

> "Be to their faults a little blind,
> Be to their virtues very kind;
> Let all their ways be unconfined,
> And clap the padlock on their mind."

"And for these reasons, thanking the gentlemen who had done him the honour to drink his health, he should propose 'Merlin, the late Minister of Justice, and trial by Jury.'"

That seems to me a burlesque worthy of the author of the Yellow-Plush papers, and not dissimilar to them in style. In 'The Friend of Humanity and the Knifegrinder,' we have a

specimen of political and social satire of the highest order—of an order which, however rare, is never out of date. I forbear to quote it only because it is one of the few pieces in *The Anti-Jacobin* which finds a place in most satirical anthologies. There are some admirable passages, too, in 'New Morality,' one line of which, at any rate, has won immortality, though few, perhaps, who quote it know whence it comes:

"Save, save, oh! save me from the candid friend!"

The whole passage is well worth quoting:

"Much may be said on both sides. Hark! I hear
A well-known voice that murmurs in my ear—
The voice of Candour. Hail! most solemn sage,
Thou drivelling virtue of this moral age;
Candour, which softens party's headlong rage,
Candour, which spares its foes, nor e'er descends
With bigot zeal to combat for its friends;
Candour, which loves in see-saw strain to tell
Of acting foolishly but meaning well;
Too nice to praise by wholesale, or to blame,
Convinced that all men's motives are the same,
And finds, with keen discriminating sight,
Black's not so black, nor white so very white.
Fox, to be sure, was vehement and wrong;
But then Pitt's words, you'll own, were rather strong.
Both must be blamed, both pardoned; 'twas just so
With Fox and Pitt full forty years ago.
So Walpole, Pulteney; factions in all times
Have had their follies, ministers their crimes.

"Give me the avowed, the erect, the manly foe,
Bold I can meet, perhaps may turn his blow;
But of all plagues, good heaven, thy wrath can send,
Save, save, oh! save me from the candid friend."

Canning, like many other people, had a profound contempt for those sickly and invertebrate cosmopolitans who, under the guise of universal philanthropy, love to vilify their own countrymen. But it is not given to everyone with equal vigour and felicity to—

> "Lash the vile impostures from the land!"

As in the following:

> "First, stern Philanthropy—not she who dries
> The orphan's tears, and wipes the widow's eyes;
> Nor she who, sainted Charity her guide,
> Of British bounty pours the annual tide;
> But French philanthropy, whose boundless mind
> Glows with the general love of all mankind—
> Philanthropy, beneath whose baneful sway
> Each patriot passion sinks, and dies away.
>
> Taught in her school to imbibe her mawkish strain,
> Condorcet filtered through the dregs of Paine;
> Each pert adept disowns a Briton's part,
> And plucks the name of England from his heart."

It is safe to say that Canning's contributions to *The Anti-Jacobin* were at least as valuable to the administration in which he served as his work at the Foreign Office.

But neither service was prolonged. *The Anti-Jacobin* made its last appearance on July 9th, 1798, and in March, 1799, Canning resigned his Under-Secretaryship, being succeeded in that office by his friend, John Hookham Frere. Canning was at once appointed an Indian Com-

missioner, and in July, 1800, he became Joint-Paymaster of the Forces.

The four years he had spent at the Foreign Office had constituted, no doubt, a valuable apprenticeship; but for some part of the time there had been considerable friction between Pitt and Grenville; and Canning's position as the friend of the former and the official subordinate of the latter had been far from pleasant. More particularly was this the case during the peace negotiations carried on in 1797 at Lille. Pitt was sincerely desirous, not for the first time, of coming to terms with the French Republic. There was much in the situation to justify the effort. Our command of the sea was still, it is true, unbroken. St. Vincent and St. Lucia had been recovered by Abercrombie in 1796; Hoche had failed in the same year in his attempted descent upon the South of Ireland; Nelson, early in 1796, had prevented the junction of the French and Spanish fleets by his victory off Cape St. Vincent, and some eighteen months later Duncan won the great victory of Camperdown. But though at sea we still more than held our own, in all other directions the outlook was black. In Ireland the association of the United Irishmen had rapidly developed revolutionary tendencies, and many parts of the country were on the verge of rebellion; in England itself there was some social discontent and much real

distress; the constant drain of specie led to a financial panic which resulted, in 1797, in the suspension of cash payments at the Bank; consols fell to 48—the lowest point touched; and, worst of all, mutinies in the fleet at Spithead and at the Nore made men tremble for the stability of the first line of defence. On the Continent there was no longer a soldier in arms against France. The rapid rise of Napoleon and the magnificent campaign against Austria and Sardinia in North Italy (1796–97) shattered the last remnants of the First Coalition; Austria sued for peace and obtained it at Campo Formio; Belgium was incorporated in France, and the greater part of North Italy was converted into the Cisalpine Republic, in close dependence upon its powerful neighbour.

But Pitt had stronger grounds for negotiation than the annihilation of his allies. The Reign of Terror was ended; Hébert, Danton, and Robespierre had in turn fallen victims to various phases of the progressive or reactionary movement; and a constitution with some promise of stability had, in 1795, been promulgated. The Directorial consitution was destined to go the way of its predecessors; but that could not at the time be foreseen, and Pitt, acutely conscious of the distress at home, was surely right in attempting to come to terms. Negotiations were opened in the spring of 1796 through Wickham, the English envoy in Switzerland, but they came

to nothing. A similar result attended the more elaborate efforts of Lord Malmesbury in the autumn of the same year. Despite these failures, and despite the determined opposition and formal protests of his own Foreign Secretary, Pitt persisted in reopening negotiations in 1797. Canning writes in terms of the utmost despondency to Ellis, who was on Lord Malmesbury's staff. "We cannot and must not disguise our situation from ourselves. If peace is to be had, we must have it. I firmly believe that we must, and it is a belief that strengthens every day. When Windham says we must not, I ask him: 'Can we have war?' It is out of the question; we have not what is of all means the most essential, the *mind*. If we are not at peace we shall be at nothing." The letter (printed in the Malmesbury Correspondence, iii. 397) was a private one, and we have no absolute warrant for assuming that Canning here represents the views of Pitt. But that Pitt was sincerely—nay, passionately—desirous of peace, there can be no doubt. The war was on his conscience, if not on his nerves. "I feel it my duty," he declared to Grenville, "as an English Minister and a Christian, to use any effort to stop so bloody and wasting a war." Lord Malmesbury was accordingly sent to Lille. His correspondence and Diaries reveal the extraordinary and, indeed, humiliating position in which he was placed during the negotiations

which ensued. "You must have perceived," he writes to Canning, "that the instructions and opinions I get from the Minister (Lord Grenville) under whose orders I am bound to act, accord so little with the sentiments and intentions I heard expressed by the Minister (Pitt) with whom I wish to act, that I am placed in a very disagreeable dilemma." Lord Malmesbury, in fact, was hardly less anxious for peace than Pitt himself. But the terms even of the peace party in France were ridiculously high, while the war party was anxious only for a final rupture of the negotiations. The reconstruction of the Directory, and the *coup d'état* of 18th Fructidor completely destroyed all hopes of an immediate peace. Lord Malmesbury received his passports, and was ordered, none too courteously, to leave France within twenty-four hours. Thus ended Pitt's last overture for peace.

Canning's position at home had been hardly less delicate than that of Lord Malmesbury. He alone, apart from Grenville and Pitt, was cognisant of the actual course of negotiations. The Cabinet was kept in the dark; the despatches from Lille were intentionally copied in so vile a hand as to be undecipherable by the ministers. Meanwhile the tension between the two leading ministers was acute, and Canning's position became daily more difficult. The situation was relieved by the renewal of the war, but it can never have

been more than tolerable, and Canning must have been unfeignedly glad in 1799 to exchange the Foreign Office for an Indian Commissionership. In 1800 he became Joint Paymaster of the Forces, and in 1801 he resigned office with Pitt, and went into violent opposition against Addington.

Pitt's resignation, it need hardly be said, was due to his inability to gain the assent of the King to his Irish policy. In that policy, in its entirety, Canning heartily concurred. Like Pitt he regarded the Act of Union as being under the circumstances inevitable. The many weaknesses revealed by experience in the "Grattan Constitution"; the dangerous divergence of the two Legislatures on constitutional questions of the first importance; the miscarriage of Pitt's wise policy in regard to Irish commerce; the intrigues of Tone and Fitzgerald with the enemies of Great Britain; finally, the outbreak of rebellion in 1798, rendered it impossible to prolong the experiment of Legislative Independence. But neither Pitt nor Canning ever intended that the Union should stand alone. "The word Union," wrote Lord Cornwallis, "will not cure the evils of this wretched country; it is a necessary preliminary, but a great deal more remains to be done. That, as his most brillant biographer points out,* was Pitt's view. He meant the

* See Lord Rosebery's 'Pitt,' p. 198.

Union to be accompanied or immediately followed by a complete and final removal of Catholic disabilities; a large scheme for the endowment of their clergy and the abolition of tithes. "Who will say," as Lord Rosebery pertinently asks, "that followed up by large spontaneous and simultaneous concessions of this kind the policy of the Union might not have been a success?" But Pitt and Canning reckoned without their King. The King refused any concession to the Irish Catholics, and in 1801 Pitt resigned. Canning went out with his chief.

It may be convenient in this place to add that Canning was at one with Pitt in thinking that so long as foreign affairs continued critical the Catholic question should be shelved. So long as George III. retained a semblance of sanity it remained on the shelf. But in 1810 the King finally went mad, and thenceforward Canning became the staunch champion of the Catholic claims in Parliament. It was he who in 1812 was in charge of the motion for the consideration of the laws affecting the Roman Catholics, a motion which was carried by an immense majority in the House of Commons. Again it was Canning who in 1822 introduced and carried the second reading of a Bill to enable Catholic Peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords. He died two years before the final triumph of the cause in

1829, but in nothing did Canning show himself more conspicuously the true disciple of Pitt than in his fearless and uncompromising advocacy of a measure which both statesmen regarded as the necessary complement and corollary of the Act of Union.

CHAPTER IV.

OPPOSITION AND OFFICE, 1801–1807.

THE period between his resignation with Pitt and his final resumption of office in 1822 must be regarded as the least satisfactory in Canning's career. Until 1801 he might fairly be looked upon as a promising and brilliant youngster; and as such a certain levity and flightiness of conduct and temper might well be forgiven to him. But he was now emerging from the period of apprenticeship, and his intellectual powers were rapidly ripening into maturity. In the House of Commons he had found his feet, and was generally recognised as a parliamentary orator of the front rank; he had had administrative experience in three separate offices; while his marriage with Miss Joan Scott (July 8, 1800) had given him an assured position in society, and had finally redeemed him from the ranks of political adventurers. Never, it would seem, did Fortune smile more kindly upon a young and ambitious statesman. But the record of the next few years, is, on the whole, more than disappointing. Two

years of incessant intrigue, of querulous and factious opposition; two years of subordinate office under Pitt; a year of opposition to the "Talents"; two years of real power and success at the Foreign Office; a disastrous quarrel with a colleague, followed by seven years of weary wandering in the shades of opposition while his own party was in power; then four years in an office which he would have scorned to accept ten years earlier; finally, another two years' seclusion. Such is Canning's record during the period which should have been his political prime. It must be confessed that it is disastrously disappointing. Not until, in 1822, the death of Castlereagh, re-opened to him the Foreign Office, did Canning regain the place in English politics which but for faults of temper he might have filled continuously for nearly twenty years.

From 1801 until 1804 the Premiership was held by the late Speaker, "Doctor" Addington. During this time Canning found the serious business of life in incessant intrigue against Pitt's successor, and his recreation in the manufacture of second-rate squibs to be fired off against the "Doctor."

Addington as an object of abuse and ridicule was irresistible to Canning. Absurdly consequential and egotistical in temper, pompous in manner, and mediocre in ability, he was just the man to provoke the ill-natured contempt and

sarcastic humour of the brilliant Irishman. Canning's poetical effusions of this period originally appeared for the most part in 'The Oracle,' but they were reprinted in the 'Spirit of the Public Journals,' and have been largely quoted in more than one biography. I select one or two specimens of this not very delicate satire.

Here is a parody of Douglas :—

"My name's *the Doctor*. On the Berkshire hills
My father purged his patients—a wise man,
Whose constant care was to increase his store,
And keep his eldest son—myself—at home.
But I had heard of politics, and longed
To sit within the Common's House and get
A place; and luck gave what my sire denied."

The following are the concluding lines of a piece entitled "Good Intentions."

"'Twere best, no doubt, the truth to tell,
But still, good soul, *he means so well!*
Others, with necromantic skill,
May bend men's passions to their will,
Raise with dark spells the tardy loan,
To shake the vaunting consul's throne;
In thee no magic arts surprise,
No tricks to cheat our wondering eyes;
On thee shall no suspicion fall
Of sleight of hand or cup and ball;
E'en foes must own thy spotless fame,
Unbranded with *a conjurer's name!*
Ne'er shall thy virtuous thoughts conspire
To wrap majestic Thames in fire!

"Hail, then, on whom our State is leaning!
O Minister of mildest meaning!
Blest with such virtues to talk big on,
With such a head (to hang a wig on),

Head of wisdom, soul of candour,
Happy Britain's guardian gander,
To rescue from the 'invading Gaul'
Her 'commerce, credit, capital!'
While Rome's great goose could save alone
One Capitol—of senseless stone."

The reference in the following lines is to the fact that Addington had appointed his brother Hiley, Secretary at War, and his brother-in-law, Bragge Bathurst, Treasurer of the Navy.

"How blest, how firm the Statesman stands
(Him no low intrigue can move)
Circled by faithful kindred bands,
And propped by fond fraternal love.
When his speeches hobble vilely,
What 'Hear him's' burst from Brother Hiley;
When his faltering periods lag,
Hark to the cheers of Brother Bragge.

"Each a gentleman at large,
Lodged and fed at public charge,
Paying (with a grace to charm ye),
This the Fleet, and that the Army,"

All this is pretty fair fooling; but it did Addington little harm, and it did Canning no good. To speak plainly, it did him an infinite amount of harm both at Court and in the House of Commons. People refused to believe that Canning was anything more than a brilliant jester. "He is unquestionably very clever," wrote Lord Malmesbury so late as 1807, "but he is hardly yet a statesman, and his dangerous habit of quizzing (which he cannot restrain) would be most unpopular in any department

which required pliancy, tact, or conciliatory behaviour." Lord Malmesbury was a friend and admirer. Sydney Smith was neither; but it can hardly be doubted that he expressed a very general opinion when, writing in the character of Peter Plymley, he said: "It is impossible to hear him upon any arduous topic without perceiving that he is eminently deficient in those solid and serious qualities upon which, and upon which alone, the confidence of a great country can properly repose. . . . Providence has made him a light jesting, paragraph-writing man, and that he will remain to his dying day. When he is jocular, he is strong; when he is serious, he is like Samson in a wig; any ordinary person is a match for him; a song, an ironical letter, a burlesque ode, an attack in the newspaper upon Nicholl's eyes, a smart speech of twenty minutes full of gross misrepresentations and clever turns, excellent language, a spirited manner, lucky quotation, success in provoking dull men . . . . these are your friend's natural weapons: all these things he can do; here I allow him to be truly great; nay, I will be just, and go still farther—if he would confine himself to these things, and consider the facile and the playful to be the basis of his character, he would, for that species of man, be universally allowed to be a person of a very good understanding: call him a legislator, a reasoner, and the conductor of the

affairs of a great nation, and it seems to me as absurd as if a butterfly were to teach bees to make honey." Moreover, as regards Addington, Canning made the grievous blunder of seriously underrating his opponent. "Pitt is to Addington, as London is to Paddington." This famous tag may contain a just estimate; the comparison was no doubt mathematically accurate. Addington was no genius; but he was no fool; and he was a *persona grata* in the House of Commons (which Canning never was), and a *persona gratissima* at Court (which Canning was still less). Finally: Addington was responsible for a peace which, though by no means glorious, was exceedingly popular, alike in Parliament and in the country.

Negotiations, begun in 1801, resulted, in 1802, in the signature of the Treaty of Amiens. Napoleon, nominally First Consul of the French Republic, really master of France, wanted time to put his new property in order, and therefore accepted peace. We restored to France, Holland, and Spain all the conquests which we had taken from them, except Ceylon and Trinidad: we surrendered, sensibly enough, the title of King of France, a title borne by all our sovereigns since 1340; and we promised to restore Malta to the Knights of S. John, a promise which, for adequate reasons, we never fulfilled.

Pitt warmly welcomed the conclusion of this peace; he doubted its permanence, but he

thought that the country needed four or five years of peace to recover breath for the next bout with Napoleon. Nor was he unwilling to come to terms with Addington. Canning was anxious to get Addington out, by fair means or foul, and to reinstate Pitt. Pitt was compelled to restrain the ardour of his disciple, and, more or less formally, to disavow his policy; but he was none the less eager to get back to power. To effect this object he was willing to surrender to the King's prejudices on the Catholic Question. Pitt's conduct in this matter has been very severely criticised. The resignation of 1801 had been, it is suggested, a mere form—a tribute to political decency—or, still worse, an opportunity for escaping the odious necessity of an inglorious peace. I cannot take this view. Pitt was always, I believe, sincerely anxious to do justice to the Irish Catholics. To have remained in office after the conclusion of the Union to which he had won their assent by something like a pledge, when that pledge could not be redeemed, would have been impossible. But his resignation had undoubtedly imperilled not merely the sanity, but the life of the King. Moreover, Pitt believed, and rightly, that he had a duty to perform not only to Ireland but to England. Was he, at a grave crisis, to persist in a policy which would have involved his perpetual exclusion from the councils of the nation?

It is said, in reply, that the King would have been forced to give way if Pitt had stood firm. But is that certain? What does appear to be certain is that the King would not have given way without a struggle which would undoubtedly have cost him his reason, and probably his life. In either case, the crown would have devolved upon the Prince Regent. Was that a contingency which Pitt could face with a light heart? Besides: the position as regards France was becoming, almost daily, more grave. On March 8, 1803, the King sent a message to both Houses advising that precautionary measures should be taken in view of the military preparations in France and Holland. A week later, Napoleon grossly insulted our ambassador in Paris, and it became obvious that we were on the brink of war. Addington at once made overtures to Pitt, but had the impertinence to suggest that they should serve together as Secretaries of State under the leadership of a third person—perhaps Lord Chatham. Pitt, however, made it clear that, if he came in at all, it must be as First Minister and Master of the Cabinet, and on no one's sufferance. "I had not," he told a friend, "even the curiosity to ask what I was to be."

War was declared in May, 1803, and for nearly twelve months Addington was compelled to conduct it; but the King at last surrendered, though with a sufficiently bad grace, and Pitt,

admitted after three years' exclusion to the King's presence, was charged with the formation of a Cabinet. Pitt pressed for the inclusion of Lord Grenville and Charles James Fox. The King ungraciously assented to the former, and agreed to admit some of Fox's friends, but at Fox himself he drew the line. Fox, at this juncture, behaved admirably, and urged his followers to go in with Pitt; Grenville, however, refused office without Fox, and Pitt, therefore, was compelled to take office with a Cabinet which was virtually Addington's old administration reconstructed and rearranged. Addington himself was for the moment excluded, but, within less than twelve months, was readmitted to the Cabinet. Canning frankly disliked the whole arrangement, and made it clear that he was not anxious to join the new Government. Pitt refused to press him, but offered him his choice between two non-Cabinet offices—the Secretaryship at War, and the Treasurership of the Navy. Canning ultimately agreed to take the latter.

Meanwhile, as we have seen, this country was once more at war, and was joined, in 1805, by Russia, Austria, and Sweden, in what is generally known as the Third Coalition. The Coalition itself lasted little more than a year, but it was a year memorable in the annals of the Napoleonic wars. For many months past Napoleon had been engaged in elaborate preparations

for the invasion of England. In the summer of 1805 the great enterprise was launched. Success depended on Napoleon's getting command of the Channel for twenty-four hours. That command he never got, and Nelson's great victory at Trafalgar rendered it for ever impossible that he should. But while Great Britain was supreme at sea, Napoleon was triumphant on land. On October 19, 1805, two days before Trafalgar, the Austrians were compelled to capitulate at Ulm, and on December 2 the combined armies of Russia and Austria were absolutely crushed at Austerlitz. Austerlitz forced Austria to her knees; the last phantom remnants of the Holy Roman Empire which, as Voltaire says, had long since ceased to be either holy, Roman, or an empire, were dissolved; Austria itself was dismembered, and, by the formation of the confederation of the Rhine, Napoleon became virtually master of Germany.

To England, also, Austerlitz was disastrous. The news of the battle is said to have killed Pitt. Perhaps the impeachment of his friend and colleague, Lord Melville, did at least as much to hasten his end; but, be that as it may, in the first days of 1806 Pitt passed away. His death was followed by the dissolution of his Ministry, and by a long period of political confusion, intrigue and unrest. Each successive political generation is apt to imagine that, as

regards personal jealousies and party intrigue, there has been no previous experience parallel to its own. To any who may be inclined to take this view I would commend the correspondence unearthed by the Historical Manuscripts Commission from the archives of Lowther and Dropmore.* There we have a pretty picture of petty intrigues in which, I am bound to confess, Canning seems to have played some considerable part.

On Pitt's death, Lord Hawkesbury was asked to form a Government, but declined. Grenville was sent for and consented, but only on condition that he might include Fox. The King's obstinacy was at last broken down, and Fox, for the brief remainder of his life—only a few months—was in office and in power. Grenville's ministry, including, as it did, Erskine, Grey and Windham, besides, of course, Fox and himself, was known as "All the Talents," though the appellation, as Fox handsomely observed, was not truly applicable to any Government from which Canning was excluded. But though Canning was out, Addington (now Lord Sidmouth) was in. Sidmouth, said Canning, is like the small-pox, since everybody must have him once in their lives—an observation which seems to shed equal lustre upon "Doctor" Addington

* Hist. MSS. Commission. Thirteenth Report. Dropmore Papers, vols. i. ii. iii.; Appendix, Part vii. Lonsdale MS.

and Doctor Jenner. Grenville would have been glad to include Canning as well; but Canning conceived himself to be bound to the Pittites, and refused to come in except with his friends.* Grenville's ministry lasted little more than a year. Fox, after holding the seals of the Foreign Office for only eight months, died on September 13, 1806, sincerely regretted by his Sovereign. "Little did I think," said the King to Lord Sidmouth, "that I should ever live to regret Mr. Fox's death." After Fox's death there was again a reshuffling of places; offers were renewed to Canning, but again Canning refused to come in except with the body of Pitt's friends, and the negotiation fell through. But early in March, 1807, Grenville's ministry foundered on the rock of the Catholic Question; not on the main rock, but on an outlying one. A Bill was introduced in 1807 to permit Roman Catholics to hold office in the Army. In deference to the King's wishes, the Ministry consented to withdraw the Bill, but the King then required a pledge that they would never, at any future time, propose to him any concession to the Roman Catholics. Refusal to give the required assurance was followed by resignation. "This," said Sheridan, "is the first administration which not only ran its head against a wall, but actually

* See Reports of Historical MSS. Commission, *cit. sup.*

built a wall for the purpose of running its head against it."

The formation of the new Government was committed to the Duke of Portland, never a strong man, and now broken by disease. But his ministry had in it some elements of strength: Perceval was Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Hawkesbury took the Home Office; Castlereagh became Secretary for the Colonies and War; and Canning, for the first time, entered the Cabinet as Foreign Secretary.

CHAPTER V.

SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 1807–1809.

CANNING now found himself at the age of thirty-seven in what was, at the moment, unquestionably the most responsible and onerous office under the Crown.

It is necessary to recall the main features of the situation with which he was confronted.

We had now reached the most critical period of the struggle against Napoleon. The Third Coalition had been shattered by Ulm and Austerlitz; Austria had been crushed and dismembered; the old Empire of the West had been finally dissolved to make room for the "new Charlemagne," who was already, thanks to the Rhenish Confederation, virtually Emperor of Germany. A significant illustration of Napoleon's supremacy had been afforded by his insolent and high-handed treatment of his Prussian "ally." With the object of embroiling Prussia in war with England, Frederick William III. was compelled to accept Hanover at the hands of Napoleon, and to close his ports against English

commerce. Consequently, in April, 1806, Fox declared war on Prussia. To this war Canning was opposed. He strongly insisted on the view that our true policy was to recognise that Prussia was yielding to *force majeure*, and to ignore an act of unwilling hostility. "Prussia," said Canning (speaking in the House of Commons, December 19, 1806), "unable to resist the power of France, encroached on us; we had, however, the option to pass over the just cause of complaint which we possessed in consequence, and to leave untouched the only Power in Europe which appeared capable of being the germ of a hostile alliance against France. But the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers has been the converse of this policy. By this policy, Prussia has been compelled to act without our advice and assistance, and to plunge into a war of which, if our advice could not have prevented it, our assistance might have meliorated the termination."

At last, after ten years of inglorious neutrality, the Prussian worm had turned against its tormentor, and, very pluckily though very inopportunely, Frederick William III. had on October 1, 1806, declared war against Napoleon. Just a fortnight later (October 14) he fought and lost the great battle of Jena. Jena was a crushing defeat for Prussia. Napoleon occupied Berlin, and, after issuing the first of his famous Decrees, marched thence into Poland.

But the campaign of 1807 was less triumphant. Napoleon suffered a distinct check at the hands of the Russians at Eylau (February); and although decidedly victorious at Friedland (June). he determined to come to terms with the Czar Alexander. On June 25, 1807, there took place in a floating pavilion, moored in the middle of the Niemen, the historic and memorable interview between the Czar of Russia and the new Emperor of the West. The issue of that conference was the famous Treaty of Tilsit. It is essential to an understanding of Canning's policy at this juncture to realise clearly the nature of the situation thus created. In brief, the Treaty of Tilsit registered the determination of the two Emperors to crush Prussia, to ruin England, and to divide the world between them. As far as the Continent was concerned, there seemed to be no insuperable obstacle to the realisation of this scheme. Absolute master of France, King of Italy, and President of the Confederation of the Rhine, Napoleon was now doling out tributary kingdoms to his kinsmen and successful marshals. Joseph Bonaparte was installed in the kingdom of Naples, Louis in that of Holland (1806), and in 1807, Westphalia was erected into a kingdom for Jerome. But while the Continent was thus prone at Napoleon's feet, England was still untouched and erect. Foiled in his attempt at direct invasion, but bent, now as always, on

her ruin and humiliation, Napoleon decided upon more devious methods of attack. The scheme which he devised was large and comprehensive, but well compacted in all its parts. Impregnable at sea, the British Empire must be attacked by land. A Franco-Russian army was to be marched through Turkey and Persia, and was to deliver the assault on the North-Western Frontier of India. "That Napoleon should have seriously contemplated marching across Europe and half Asia to invade the territory of an island within twenty miles of the French coast, that he should have thought it, on the whole, less impracticable to send a force from the Danube or Constantinople to Delhi, is certainly," as Sir Alfred Lyall* observes, "a remarkable illustration of the impregnability of effective naval defence." Meanwhile, British commerce was to be strangled by the Continental System, and a strenuous attempt was to be made to equalise the conditions of the naval struggle by the seizure of the fleets of Denmark and Portugal.

This last resolution was fraught with momentous consequences for Napoleon, and is of primary interest to the student of Canning's foreign policy. It not only led to one of the boldest and most dramatic acts of Canning's official life, but constituted the real beginning of the movement which ultimately involved the downfall of

* 'British Dominion in India,' p. 241.

Napoleon. This being so, I must deal with the episode in some slight detail.

The famous meeting between Napoleon and the Czar took place, as we have seen, on June 25. On July 16, Canning received, from three separate quarters, warnings as to the Franco-Russian alliance and the threatened attack upon Denmark. On the receipt of this grave intelligence he acted with the utmost promptitude. On July 22, he wrote to Brooke Taylor, who was proceeding as our envoy to Copenhagen, that he had received direct intelligence from Tilsit as to Bonaparte's "proposal for a maritime league against Great Britain, to which the accession of Denmark was represented by Bonaparte to be as certain as it was essential. . . . The confidence with which Bonaparte spoke of the accession of Denmark to such a league, coupled with other circumstances and particulars of intelligence which have reached this country, makes it absolutely necessary that his Majesty should receive from the Court of Denmark some distinct and satisfactory assurances, either that no such proposition has been made to that Court by France, or that, having been made, it has been rejected, and some sufficient security that, if made or repeated, it will meet with the same reception." The recent publication of the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit has proved up to the hilt the substantial accuracy of Canning's information. How that

information was obtained is still a matter of conjecture.* But the main fact is no longer in dispute. If Great Britain refused the terms to be offered to her, the two Emperors had definitely agreed to "Summon the three Courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Lisbon to close their ports to the English and declare war against England. That one of the three courts which refuses shall be treated as an enemy; and in the case of Sweden refusing, Denmark shall be compelled to declare war against her."

Canning lost not a moment. Denmark was informed that it must accept an immediate alliance with England, and must hand over the whole of its fleet to England as "a sacred deposit and with a solemn convention as to its restoration at the conclusion of the war." In this event England would agree to pay to Denmark £100,000 a year as interest on the "deposit," and to restore it, at the conclusion of a general peace, "in the same condition and state of equipment as when received under the protection of the British flag."

The sequel is well known. Canning's demand was refused, and we were under the very disagreeable necessity of bombarding Copenhagen

* Much light has been thrown upon this dark episode by the researches of Dr. J. Holland Rose. Cf. especially 'Life of Napoleon I.' vol. ii. and 'English Historical Review,' vols. xi. xvi. I have made free use of Dr. Rose's discoveries at the Record Office, and wish to acknowledge my obligations to him.

(September 8, 1807), and effecting the seizure of the fleet by force.

From that day to this, the policy of Canning and the action of the British Government have been criticised (as was to be expected) with extreme acerbity. "This shameful deed of high-handed violence must be laid," says a distinguished American critic,* "at Canning's door." "High-handed" the deed indubitably was; but was it "shameful"? I venture to think, on the contrary, that an exceptionally bold policy was entirely justified by exceptionally critical circumstances. The necessity of employing force towards a small State must of course be regretted; but Denmark could not at this time urge any plea for specially indulgent treatment at the hands of England. On the contrary, as Dr. J. H. Rose points out, "her leanings had of late been so notoriously favourable to France, that in the Russo-Prussian Treaty of Bartenstein (April 1807) to which we were accessories, the Courts of St. Petersburg and Berlin had proposed to use force to compel her to join the coalition against France." Nor can we forget that the gravity of the crisis was beyond all power of words to exaggerate. Between England and Napoleon the struggle was one of life and death. There was no room for neutrality. "If England refuses to accept the Russian mediation," so Napoleon

* Dr. Sloane.

wrote to Bernadotte on August 2, 1807, "Denmark must declare war against her, or I must declare war against Denmark." That sentence is a concise summary of the situation, and an ample justification for Canning. Even had Denmark been anxious to preserve neutrality, it is absolutely certain that she could not have done so. Her fleet had to fall into the hands of England or France, and we at least may be forgiven for believing that England could offer better security for the temporary "deposit." To my thinking, it is beside the mark to argue, as some critics (*e.g.* Mr. Fyffe,*) have done, that the acquisition of the Danish fleet by Napoleon would have been insufficient to turn the scale against the victors of Trafalgar. Possibly not. But the moment was not one at which we could afford to run any risks; and twenty ships of the line, eighteen frigates, nine brigs, and a number of gun-boats would have been beyond question substantial reinforcement for the French Navy.

Finally: Canning's action has the justification of unquestioned and complete success. The conspiracy of Tilsit was checkmated; an essential part of Napoleon's scheme was frustrated, and the Emperor himself (as we learn from Fouché) was driven into transports of rage. We incurred, indeed, the lasting enmity of Denmark, but we earned respect in a more important quarter.

* 'History of Modern Europe,' vol. i. p. 345.

"It was one of the recommendations of the enterprise to me," wrote Canning in a private letter to Lord Boringdon, "that it was sure, if successful, to *stun* Russia into her senses again. It has done so." And for once Castlereagh's opinion coincided with Canning's. "The tone of the Russian Cabinet," he wrote to Lord Cathcart, "has become much more conciliatory to us since they heard of your operations at Copenhagen." No one regretted more sincerely than Canning the necessity for harsh and "high-handed" measures towards a small, if unfriendly, power; but every fresh scrap of evidence which has leaked out from the Continental Archives, from that day to this, has tended to substantiate more and more completely the soundness of his intuition, if not the accuracy of his information.

Thus imminent danger was averted in the North. Two months after the British bombardment of Copenhagen, a French army under Junot occupied Lisbon (November, 1807). This was another instalment of the Tilsit scheme. Portugal was suddenly ordered to adopt the Continental System, to close all its ports to English commerce, and to confiscate all the property of English merchants resident in Portugal. Portugal was no more in a position to disobey the dictates of Napoleon than Denmark; but for a century her connection with England had been close, and her attitude to

this country was as friendly as that of Denmark was the reverse. Here, again, neutrality was impossible. "You must break either with England or France." Such was the language employed by Napoleon to the Portuguese ambassador on August 2, 1807—just a month before the bombardment of Copenhagen. Before the end of August forty thousand men were massed at Bayonne, ready to enforce Napoleon's decree. The Portuguese hoped against hope that the threatened blow would be averted by a general peace. The hope was vain, and the blow descended upon the devoted victim. The Portuguese Court fled to Brazil, and in 1808 England and France were face to face in the Peninsula, as, in 1807, they had been face to face in the Baltic.

But the French occupation of Lisbon was of wider significance than the English bombardment of Copenhagen. It marks the real beginning of the anti-Napoleonic reaction among the peoples of the Continent.

> "But now, rous'd slowly from her opiate bed,
> Lethargic Europe lifts the heavy head;
> Feels round her heart the creeping torpor close,
> And starts with horror from her dire repose."

These contemporary lines may have small merit as poetry, but they express an important historical fact.

It is no part of my purpose to tell the story

of sordid and sinister intrigue which led to the outbreak of the Peninsular War. Any who will may read it in the graphic pages which Mr. Oman* is now giving to the world. Enough to note here that after a long-drawn intrigue between Napoleon, the Spanish Minister, Godoy—the "Prince of the Peace," and the heir to the Spanish throne Ferdinand, Prince of the Asturias, the Treaty of Fontainebleau was concluded (October, 1807). Under this treaty Portugal was to be partitioned between France and Spain. In March, 1808, Murat occupied Madrid, and Charles IV. was forced to abdicate in favour of Prince Ferdinand. In May, the wretched Ferdinand was forced to abdicate; in June, Joseph Bonaparte was seated on the throne of Spain, and Murat was sent in his place to Naples. It was not difficult to dispose of the Spanish princes, but Napoleon had characteristically left out of account the Spanish people. In Spain, however, the people counted for a good deal; and herein lies the significance of the new chapter opened by the events thus roughly summarised. "Spain," as Professor Seeley† points out, "was Spain, but those Italian and German States were not Italy and Germany, but only in Italy and Germany. . . . It was evident that the one thing needful was

* 'History of the Peninsular War,' by Professor Charles Oman.

† 'Life of Stein,' vol. ii. pp. 19, 24.

found, and a new idea took possession of the mind of Europe. That idea was not democracy or liberty; it was nationality. It was the idea of the nation as distinguished from the State; the union by blood as distinguished from the union by interest." Unlike Westphalians or Neapolitans the Spaniards were not minded to be tossed contemptuously to a kinsman of the Emperor of the West. National committees or Juntas were rapidly organised in all parts of Spain, and before Joseph had been in Madrid many weeks the news reached Napoleon that twenty thousand Frenchmen under Dupont had been surrounded by the Spanish insurgents at Baylen and compelled to lay down their arms (July 21).

Pitt had long ago asserted that only a war of peoples could save Europe, and just before his death had predicted to Lord Wellesley that "this war would begin in Spain." Canning was not slow to realise that the moment of the fulfilment of his great master's prediction had arrived. From the outset he clearly perceived the significance of the new factor which had entered into the European problem. He declared with emphasis that any nation which would oppose France—"the common enemy of all nations"—"becomes instantly our essential ally," and he insisted that vigorous efforts should be made to encourage and to sustain the resistance of the Spanish people.

Arms, money, and military stores were sent out to Spain, and in July a force was despatched under Sir Arthur Wellesley. Wellesley landed in Portugal on August 1, and successfully drove back the French from Rolica on the 17th, and four days later inflicted a crushing defeat upon Junot at Vimiero. But the fruits of that great victory were snatched from his hand by the inopportune arrival of Sir Harry Burrard; who, in his turn, was superseded by Sir Hew Dalrymple. Dalrymple immediately concluded with Junot the Convention of Cintra.

Under that strange Convention the French agreed to evacuate Portugal, but they themselves, their guns, and their baggage, were to be sent back to France on British ships. A howl of indignation greeted the announcement of these terms both in England and Spain. This indignation was shared alike by Sir Arthur Wellesley and Canning; and the fact that the Convention was approved in the Cabinet during the latter's absence supplied, as we shall see presently, one of the grouds of dissension between himself and his colleagues, particularly Castlereagh. The appointment of Sir John Moore to the command of a fresh expeditionary force still further emphasised the split. Moore was a fine soldier, but a man of despondent temper.* "Remember, my lord,"

* Cf. *Quarterly Review*, No. 3 (August, 1809), an article by Canning and George Ellis on Moore's expedition.

he said to Castlereagh when setting out for his command, "I protest against the expedition, and foretell its failure." Canning may well be forgiven his indignant outburst when he heard the story from Castlereagh's lips: "Good God; and do you really mean to say that you allowed a man entertaining such feelings with regard to the expedition to go out and command it?" The sequel is known to all. With a force ridiculously insufficient, Moore was ordered to advance from Lisbon to the support of the Spaniards at Salamanca. Moore himself was under no illusions. "I mean to proceed bridle in hand, for if the bubble burst and Madrid falls, we shall have a run for it." The bubble did burst. Three hundred thousand French troops were concentrated in Spain; Napoleon in person assumed the command; the Spaniards were scattered like chaff before the wind; Napoleon marched on Madrid, restored Joseph to the throne, turned on Moore, but, called away by the impending war with Austria, left the pursuit to Soult and Ney. After a retreat, which has generally been described as masterly,* Moore reached Corunna, and there, on January 16, was compelled to fight the action in which he fell.

Moore's forced retreat, coming on the top of

*The latest authority on the Peninsular War (Professor Charles Oman) strongly dissents from the received judgment (Cf. vol. i. pp. 598–601) on Moore's retreat.

the Convention of Cintra, led to a loud outcry in England in favour of the abandonment of the Peninsula. Canning stoutly resisted these timid counsels. Even in a military sense the situation seemed to him far from hopeless. It was ridiculous to expect the raw and undisciplined insurgents to withstand, in pitched battles, the seasoned veterans of France, but they might still seriously embarrass Napoleon by guerilla warfare. Besides, the question was more than a military one. To keep a hold on Spain was, under the circumstances, a political necessity. Canning realised this to the full, and carried his point with his colleagues and the country. The two Wellesleys were sent back to the Peninsula; Lord Wellesley as the accredited agent to the Supreme or Central Junta; Sir Arthur to command the troops; to lead them to victory at Oporto, at Talavera, at Busaco, and on many another historic field. To Canning and the brothers Wellesley not England alone, but Europe at large owes an imperishable debt. But, for the moment, the solid success, achieved by English arms and English diplomacy in the Peninsula, was neutralised by bungling and incompetence elsewhere. Chatham and Castlereagh were an offset to Wellesley and Canning, and the disastrous expedition to Walcheren dimmed the glories of Oporto and Talavera.

The scheme of an expedition to Walcheren

had long been in Castlereagh's mind; and there was much to be said for it. If successful, it would not only encourage the German people in resistance to Napoleon,* but would inflict a crushing blow upon the embryo French fleet at Antwerp. It is open to question whether it was wise, in view of Wellesley's operations in the South, to direct so large a British force to the Scheldt; but, after all, it was the execution, not the conception, which was chiefly at fault. Everything went wrong with the ill-fated expedition. First, there was delay owing to the scandal about the Duke of York; Napoleon's victory at Wagram (July, 1809) dissipated the hope of a general rising in Germany; the troops were decimated by disease; while disaster was finally assured by misunderstandings and quarrels between the commanders. The oft-quoted epigram is as accurate as it is scathing:

> "Lord Chatham, with his sword drawn,
> Kept waiting for Sir Richard Strahan;
> Sir Richard, eager to be at 'em,
> Kept waiting, too, for whom? Lord Chatham."

At home, recriminations in regard to the Walcheren fiasco brought to a head the long simmering dissensions between the two leading members of Portland's ministry.

Canning had, long ago, made up his mind that

* Cf. *Quarterly Review*, No. 2 (May, 1809), an article by Sharon Turner and Canning on the Austrian Rising of 1809.

Castlereagh was over-weighted at the War Office; and on April 2, 1809, he wrote to the Duke of Portland intimating that unless Castlereagh were removed he must himself resign. Portland consulted the King, and the King seems to have suggested that if Canning would hold his hand Castlereagh might be transferred to another department at the close of the Session. To Castlereagh himself Portland said not a word, and thus, by his timidity, laid Canning open to charges of duplicity, intrigue and bad faith, which, certainly for the moment, and perhaps permanently, damaged his reputation. The Session ended in June; Canning again pressed his point, but nothing was done, and not until September—and then by accident—did Castlereagh hear a word about the matter. His very natural indignation knew no bounds. He demanded satisfaction from Canning; a duel was fought, and Canning was slightly wounded. Meanwhile, both statesmen had retired from the Ministry.

The whole business was unfortunate to the last degree.* Damaging to the Government and to the country; to Canning it was disastrous. The country, at a critical moment, lost its two ablest administrators; Canning lost a position in

* The whole of the documentary evidence—published statements by Canning and Castlereagh, etc.—may be read in the 'Annual Register' for 1809.

English politics which it took him twelve years laboriously to regain. That Castlereagh had grievous cause to complain is not to be denied; but on a careful review of the evidence it is obvious, I think, that the blame which fell upon Canning was wholly disproportionate. That Canning had a perfect right to demand Castlereagh's removal was frankly admitted by the latter. "I have no right, as a public man, to resent your demanding, upon public grounds, my removal from the particular office I have held, or even from the administration as a condition of your continuing a member of the Government." What Castlereagh complained of —and justly—was, that he was kept in total ignorance of Canning's sentiments and demands, and that he was permitted "in this state of delusion to continue to conduct the entire management of the campaign and to engage in a new expedition of the most extensive, complicated, and important nature under the full persuasion, not that Mr. Canning had supplanted him in office, and possessed in his pocket a promise for his dismissal, but that he really enjoyed (as during the period he in outward show and daily concurrence experienced) Mr. Canning's sincere, liberal and *bona fide* support as a co-operating and approving colleague." It is not astonishing that such a charge, from such a quarter, should have seriously damaged Canning's reputation

for straightforwardness and good faith. On the other hand, Canning's own contention has equal force. Holding, as he did, that the national interests demanded the removal of Castlereagh from the War Office, he had the courage to state his views to "the King's minister to be laid by that minister before the King." At the same time he tendered his own resignation as an alternative. Neither the Prime Minister nor the King would allow him to resign, and both promised that a change should be effected at the War Office, but pressed for delay. In delay, Canning, reluctantly and for the time, acquiesced; but never, he asserts, in concealment. Discovering at the end of June that no communication had been made to Castlereagh, he protested to Portland "in terms of the strongest remonstrance," and again pressed the acceptance of his resignation. On a distinct assurance that Castlereagh should be informed, he once more acquiesced in postponement, but on September 6, on learning that nothing had been done, he resigned. Bearing in mind the critical circumstances of the time and the country, I confess myself unable to perceive wherein Canning was to blame. From the first he took "the regular, effectual, and straightforward course," by laying two alternatives before the Prime Minister. Believing that one had been accepted he withdrew the other. The blame must rest—so it appears to me—partly

on the timidity and procrastination of the Duke of Portland, and partly on the ill-advised intervention of the friends of Lord Castlereagh.

But I should not have dwelt at such length upon the incident had it not involved a larger issue. Canning's retirement at this juncture was little short of a national disaster. He had held the seals of the Foreign Office little more than two years; but in those two years he had entirely altered the political situation in Europe. When he took office in 1807 everything hung in the balance; when he resigned in 1809 the scale was slowly but surely turning against Napoleon. With a weak man at the English Foreign Office the Franco-Russian conspiracy might well have triumphed; Tilsit might have marked not the fatal turning point but a step in the ascent; Denmark and Portugal—their fleets in French hands—might have been absorbed into the Napoleonic system; and the Spanish rising might have added but one more chapter to the history of splendid but futile insurrections.

Thanks to the promptitude and intrepidity of Canning the situation was saved; the Danish fleet was secure in English keeping, and Portugal was preserved as an effective basis for expeditions which led slowly but inevitably to the final overthrow of Napoleon.

CHAPTER VI.

1809–1822.

CANNING'S quarrel with Lord Castlereagh suddenly interrupted his official career at a singularly interesting point. That interruption unquestionably involved a serious misfortune to the country, and played terrible havoc with the political fortunes of Canning himself. For the next twelve years (1810 to 1822) Canning, now in the very prime of his political life, was absent from the inner Councils of the nation. He came back, it is true, to the Cabinet in 1816, but he was never really in power again until 1822. For this exclusion Canning, it must be admitted, was himself largely responsible. Before the resignation of the Duke of Portland there had been some discussion as to the succession to the Premiership. Canning said bluntly that he would not serve under Perceval; but, with equal frankness, said that he could not expect Perceval to serve under him. Possible *rois fainéants* were mentioned; but then came the crisis of the quarrel with Castlereagh; Portland

resigned; Canning was out; Spencer Perceval was in, and in as Prime Minister. Canning's haughty and impatient temper had played him false not for the first nor for the last time. Had he consented, in 1809, to serve under Perceval, his succession to the Premiership, three years later, could hardly have been disputed. The blunder was bitterly regretted by his friends. "As for Canning," wrote Sir Walter Scott, "with his immense talent, wit, and eloquence he unhappily wants prudence and patience, and in his eager desire to scramble to the highest point is not sufficiently select as to his associates." In 1812, Perceval was assassinated, and Lord Liverpool came in. Again Canning had his chance, and again he lost it by his unyielding temper. "*Aut Cæsar aut nullus.*" He would accept, as yet, no office which did not carry with it at least the leadership of the House of Commons, if not the nominal headship of the Government. In 1812 he received from Lord Liverpool and Lord Castlereagh an offer which he himself described "as perhaps the handsomest ever made to an individual." Castlereagh offered, while retaining the leadership of the House, to resign to his great rival the Foreign Office. Without the leadership Canning declined office. Had he accepted it, the great diplomatic settlement of 1815 would have been in his hands instead of in those of Lord Castlereagh, and the

whole course of European affairs might for a generation have been altered. To speculate on historical "might have beens" is an occupation as fascinating as it is futile. But it is impossible to avoid unavailing regret that in the last years of the great war and the first years of the great peace the destinies of England and of Europe were not committed to Canning.

Gradually, however, the proud spirit was broken. In 1814, Canning, having arranged to go in a private capacity to Lisbon with his son, was induced by the Government to accept the Embassy in that capital. It was another great blunder, and Canning afterwards recognised it as such. "In all probability," he said to Stapleton, "I should have had the most influential post in the Government in the House of Commons if I had not fallen into that error." The appointment was attacked, not unreasonably, as a gross job, and Canning's prestige received a damaging blow, from which it did not soon recover.

Two years later, in 1816, he returned to the Cabinet as President of the Board of Control. The office was, of course, both honourable and important, but its acceptance shows how far the proud spirit had been humbled: in 1812 to refuse the Foreign Office without the lead of the House; in 1816 to accept an office barely of Cabinet rank.

The Presidency of the Board of Control under

old John Company was a very different thing from the Secretaryship of State under the rule of the Crown. And it cannot be said that Canning made any special mark during his four years' tenure of the post. It may be claimed, perhaps, that he put no obstacle in the way of Lord Hastings' brilliant and beneficent administration in India, and that his tenure was coincident with the final destruction of the tyrannous and extortionate power of the Mahrattas and Pindarees. More cannot truthfully be said. But in 1820 Canning retired from the Government. English politics were at that time entirely overshadowed by the sordid and unseemly squabble between George IV. and his unhappy but imprudent Queen. Canning had long been a friend of the latter, and when, in 1820, the King's accession and his determination to obtain a divorce raised the whole unsavoury question afresh, he felt that he ought not to be a member of the Government which had to settle it. The King, though he never liked Canning, behaved to him, at this juncture, with exceptional consideration, and all his colleagues parted with him, it would seem, with genuine regret. Stapleton prints letters from his former enemies, Sidmouth and Castlereagh, which seem to prove that the old bitterness between them and Canning was largely assuaged, and which in point of cordiality leave nothing to be desired.

In one respect, however, Canning's reputation was not enhanced by his inclusion in the Cabinet during these four years, though I cannot help feeling that Sir E. Lytton Bulwer makes too much of the matter. "It is impossible," he says, "to look back to these years and to consider the conduct of Mr. Canning without deep regret. The most eloquent and plausible defences of the un-English policy which prevailed were made by him." In regard to this judgment a word of explanation must be offered.

The years immediately following the Great Peace of 1815 comprised a period of exceptional commercial depression and terrible social distress. During the later years of the war England had enjoyed a virtual monopoly not only of the carrying trade, but of the manufacturing industry of the world. No other country had as yet had an opportunity to adopt the new methods of production and exchange which in the aggregate are known as the "Industrial Revolution." In the inflated prosperity which ensued upon the Revolution all classes shared. Rents bounded up; profits were enormous; and wages rose, though less rapidly. But with the peace there came a terrible reaction. Commercial dealings were restricted; prices fell rapidly; poor rates threatened to absorb rents; innumerable failures were announced; taxation pressed with undoubted

severity on all classes; while traders, great and small, were still further distracted by currency disturbances. No element of confusion was lacking to the economic situation. The deepest depression settled down alike upon agriculture and manufactures. The answers sent in to a circular letter issued by the Board of Agriculture in 1816 show that the aggregate fall in rental was not less than £9,000,000, while from all sides came the tale of farms thrown up, and farmers bankrupt, of mills closed, and furnaces blown out. Close on the heels of economic distress came social disorder and political discontent. Rick-burning in the country, machine-breaking in the towns became epidemic. The "Luddite riots" in Nottingham; the Spa Fields riots in London, the "March of the Blanketeers"; the Derbyshire "Insurrection"; were merely symptomatic of general unrest.

The Government relied on two panaceas: for economic distress—protection; for social discontent—coercion. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended in 1817, and in 1819 the famous Six Acts were passed. Sidmouth, Castlereagh, and Eldon, the High Tory members of the Government, are the men generally held accountable for this purely restrictive policy. And perhaps with justice. But Canning, the disciple of Pitt, and the apostle of the doctrines of Adam Smith, must, of course, take his share of whatever blame attaches to

the Cabinet. Their sins and shortcomings have been painted in lurid colours—painted, I cannot help thinking, with grotesque exaggeration. It is easy to be wise after the event and to say that timely political reform and fiscal readjustment would have cured the disease in 1820. Canning was as strongly in favour of fiscal reform as he was opposed to political reform. And in both cases his view was, in one sense, justified by events. Nothing did more to embitter and exaggerate Chartism than the Reform Act of 1832; Peel's budgets of 1842–1846 took all the sting out of it. But the truth is that, though he was ready on occasion to employ his debating skill in defence of the Cabinet in which he sat, Canning took only a languidly philosophic interest in purely domestic politics. It was in foreign policy that his genius found free play.

After his retirement from the Government in 1820, Canning, for a time, went abroad, feeling it better to be out of the way while the Queen's business was under discussion. In 1822, to the surprise of many of his friends, he accepted the Governor-Generalship of India.

Before he could sail to take up his post, the death of Castlereagh by his own suicidal hand opened up to Canning the position he had so long desired. Both the vacant offices were, with little delay, placed at his disposal by Lord Liverpool, and thus, in 1822, at the age of fifty-

two, Canning became for the second time Foreign Secretary—for the first time leader of the House of Commons.

Of his unfortunate predecessor one word may be said. His powers were as seriously underrated by his great rival as they have been, as a rule, by historical critics. He was, it is true, a miserable debater—he could hardly put two sentences together in an intelligible form—but he was a man of real force of character, of conspicuous courage, of immense industry, and of distinct administrative capacity. But at last Castlereagh was gone; the stage was clear for Canning; and the next five years may be considered as his reign. He had waited impatiently for his kingdom, and he now came into what he had long regarded as his own.

CHAPTER VII.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 1822–1827.

WHEN Canning returned to the Foreign Office in 1822, the counter revolution was in full tide, and Metternich was the dictator of European politics. So severe was the reaction in Continental Europe that it earned the designation of the "White Terror." But within the last two years there had been on many sides manifestations of impatience with the policy of simple reaction. In Spain, in Portugal, in Southern Italy and in Greece, insurrections had actually broken out. The European monarchs, alarmed by these fresh dangers, placed themselves unreservedly in the hands of Metternich. On Italy, Austria herself laid a heavy hand; crushed out with severity the northern rising at Novara; and by force restored the wretched Bourbon to his throne at Naples. France, under the rule of Villèle, and with the full concurrence of the European Concert, prepared to do the same in Spain.

Such was the situation by which Canning was confronted. How had it arisen? A few retrospective words are necessary to make this clear.

(a) *The Holy Alliance*, 1815–1822.

On the final overthrow of Napoleon, in 1815, Europe was face to face with problems of immense complexity. The solution of them was committed to a Conference at Vienna. For the settlement which emerged from their hands the diplomatists have been severely blamed. Nor is it difficult to justify the censures they have incurred. It goes without saying that the monarchs and ministers of 1815—the Alexanders and Frederick Williams, the Humboldts and Hardenbergs, the Castlereaghs and Metternichs—were purblind and stupid, particularly as viewed from the lofty elevation of historical criticism. But the diplomatists had to deal with the facts, and the critics have only to deal with the diplomatists. And the facts at that time were unusually awkward. The whole European States-system was in ruins: devastated by the Napoleonic flood. But when the waters subsided, the old land-marks re-emerged. The architects had to rebuild, but they had to rebuild, more or less, on the old sites. And that, it is understood, is an awkward thing to do. Moreover, they had, in

mere self-defence, to erect the strongest possible barriers against a recurrence of the flood. It is easy to criticise, and difficult to defend the character of the structure which they raised. On rotten and effete foundations they reared a fabric top-heavy and ungainly. Look where you will, the same ugly features meet the eye. Nothing could have been worse, for example, than the settlement of Italy. Its re-partition and *morcellement* was not only a crime but a blunder. But unified Italy, it is only fair to remember, was a Napoleonic monument—a legacy of revolution. The diplomatists of 1815 could not look back upon '48, '59, '66 and '70. We can. And looking, we can see that the Napoleonic occupation of Italy was a step towards the goal of good. Had we been at Vienna in 1815, we should probably have regarded it as a step towards the abyss of revolution.

The union of Holland and Belgium was even more foolish, and much more short-lived. The two peoples were utterly opposed in temper, in race, in historical tradition, and in creed. But a robust middle kingdom, a good stout barrier between France and Germany, had been the dream of ages; 1815 might well seem a convenient moment for its fulfilment. Poland, again, has not relished absorption into Russia, but it had to be absorbed by somebody. Then as to the Rhine frontier. Alsace and Lorraine

were German, and Hardenberg was unquestionably justified in urging that the moment was a convenient one for effecting their restoration to Germany. France had undoubtedly used those Provinces not as a defensive barrier, but as a stepping-stone for aggression, and as an instrument for retarding the unification of Germany. In the court of historic judicature France stood condemned, and might justly be sentenced to forfeit any rights she had by occupation acquired. But, on the other hand, it was impossible to ignore the force of the Duke of Wellington's plea: "Against what have you been fighting all these years? Not against France, but against revolution incarnate. Revolutionary France is more likely to distress the world than France, however strong in her frontier, under a regular government." But to send back the Bourbons to France stripped of the Rhine Provinces would be, from the outset, to associate the restored monarchy with territorial dismemberment, and would fatally weaken its prestige. Thus, despite the memorable and prescient protest of Hardenberg, Alsace and Lorraine were restored to France, and the just rectification of the Rhine frontier was deferred for half a century.

It is true that here, as elsewhere, the outlook of the diplomatists was exceedingly narrow and contracted; it is true that new forces had been generated in the last twenty years destined to

remould the politics of Europe; and it is obvious that the rulers failed to recognise them. They were still dominated by the outworn ideas of the eighteenth century—the principle of the balance of power, and the supremacy of dynastic interests. Thus the Congress of Vienna appropriately marks not the beginning of the new century; but the close of the old one; and the settlement it effected was foredoomed.

But its authors, small blame to them, wanted to give it the best chance they could, and to this end established the European Concert, first known to diplomacy as the Holy Alliance.*

This "Alliance," which dominated European politics from the fall of Napoleon until the accession of Canning, was primarily the work of Alexander of Russia. The Czar's idea was to establish what we should now call the Concert of Europe on the basis of "the sublime truths of the religion of God our Saviour." The territorial arrangements established at Vienna were to be permanently guaranteed, and wars of aggression summarily arrested. This was to be done by an "international High Court of Sovereign Judges." The principle was irreproachable. Unfortunately, in practice, it turned out that the alliance, intended, in all good faith, to inaugurate a reign of peace and righteousness on earth, rapidly

* On this subject *cf.* Mr. Alison Phillips's 'Modern Europe,' to which I wish to acknowledge my obligations.

degenerated into a "sort of European police for the suppression of all liberal movements."

In the Holy Alliance England had no formal part. It was an alliance of sovereigns; and "sovereign" the Prince Regent was not. But he wrote to his "brothers" to express his cordial sympathy with the "sublime principles" of the allies. The attitude of his Ministers, on the contrary, was from the first suspicious. Castlereagh regarded the whole thing as a piece of mysticism and nonsense. Canning clearly realised the dangers which lurked in it. Where was the line to be drawn? The "Alliance" was to guarantee the international *status quo*. But as Canning saw "it was but a short step from interfering with the external relations of a sovereign state to interfering in those of its internal relations which might be supposed to exercise an external effect."* His suspicions were soon justified, and justified abundantly.

The Royalist Restorations of 1815 were quickly followed by a perfect "orgy of reaction"—in France, partial and comparatively cautious; in Spain and in Italy, avowed and unrestrained. But the debauch was too violent to last. The wretched Ferdinand VII. of Spain—one of the poorest specimens of a wretched stock—soon found himself embroiled, not only with his subjects at home, but with the Colonies in South

* Alison Phillips.

America, From Spain, this revolutionary contagion spread (1820–22) to Portugal and to Southern Italy. Meanwhile the members of the Holy Alliance had become thoroughly alarmed; and in October, 1820, on the invitation of Prince Metternich, they had assembled in conference at Troppau. The Emperors of Austria and Russia were present in person; Hardenberg represented Prussia; Sir Charles Stewart (Castlereagh's brother) watched the proceedings on behalf of England, but took no formal part in them. On the 19th of November, 1820, a formal Protocol was issued over the signatures of Austria, Russia and Prussia. The terms of this document are of some importance: "States which have undergone a change of government due to revolution, the results of which threaten other States, *ipso facto*, cease to be members of the European Alliance, and remain excluded from it until their situation gives guarantees for legal order and stability. . . If, owing to such alterations, immediate danger threatens other States, the Powers bind themselves, by peaceful means, or if need be by arms, to bring back the guilty State into the bosom of the Great Alliance."

To this Protocol France, in general terms, adhered; but Castlereagh, on behalf of England, protested against it with some warmth, and declared that the principle on which the Allies proposed to act was in "direct

repugnance to the fundamental laws of the United Kingdom."

From Troppau the Conference adjourned to Laibach, a small town in Austrian Carniola. At Laibach, Ferdinand of Naples was summoned to attend and to give an account before the august tribunal of the Holy Allies of his dealings with his Neapolitan subjects. Before leaving Naples, the King was compelled once more to declare on oath his determination to maintain the "Spanish" Constitution. To this Constitution he had already (in 1820) sworn his adhesion, with a parade of special solemnity. The old King, having heard Mass, approached the altar, and, in presence of the court and the ministers, took the prescribed oath. Then fixing his eyes upon the cross, he cried: "Omnipotent God, who with infinite penetration lookest into the heart and into the future, if I lie, or if one day I should be faithless to my oath, do Thou at this moment annihilate me." No sooner, however, was he fairly on his way to Laibach, than he issued a letter to the sovereigns declaring that the Constitution had been extorted from him by force, and that his adhesion to it—despite his blasphemous professions—was null and void. So prudent and honourable a prince was sure of a warm welcome from the Holy Allies at Laibach. To the latter the Neapolitan "Revolution" was a God-send—an admirable opportunity

for applying in practice the principles adopted at Troppau. A message was despatched to Naples, nominally addressed by King Ferdinand to his son, stating that the Allies would not countenance a Constitution which was the fruit of revolution, and that complete submission would alone avert war. Meanwhile Austria was entrusted with the congenial task of restoring order and legitimate authority in Southern Italy.

On February 6, 1821, orders were given to the Austrian army to cross the Po, and six weeks later fifty thousand troops marched, practically without resistance, into Naples. Stern vengeance was exacted from all who had had part or lot in the Constitutional movement; the principles of legitimacy were triumphantly re-asserted, and a system of government was established which was subsequently—and with accuracy—described by Mr. Gladstone as "an outrage upon religion, upon civilisation, upon humanity, and upon decency."

Against this monstrous interference in the domestic concerns of an independent State, one protesting voice only was raised. That voice was Castlereagh's. Castlereagh's foreign policy has been most unfairly judged. Stapleton, in particular, is responsible for stories which have done material damage to his reputation. Those stories are now shown to have been mere unfounded gossip. Castlereagh may have lacked

vigour in action, but nothing could be more emphatic or more explicit than his repudiation of the principles of the Holy Allies, or more correct than his definition of the attitude of Great Britain. In language virtually identical with that employed by Canning two years later, Castlereagh protested against the Laibach doctrines: "England," he wrote, "stands pledged to uphold the territorial arrangements established at the Congress of Vienna. The invasion of a weaker State by a stronger State for the purposes of conquest would demand our immediate interference. But with the internal affairs of each separate State we have nothing to do. We could neither share in nor approve, though we might not feel called upon to resist, the intervention of one ally to put down internal disturbances in the dominions of another. We have never committed ourselves to any such principle as that, and we must as a general rule protest against it."

It was Castlereagh, and Castlereagh alone, who prevented the international acceptance of the doctrine of interference which, promulgated at Aix la Chapelle (1818) by Alexander, formed for some years the basis of the policy of the Holy Allies. For the time being, however, that doctrine was triumphant.

But while Austria was finding congenial employment in Italy, news of infinitely greater

significance reached Laibach from another quarter. The Congress learnt that the Greeks, flinging off at last the sloth of centuries, had raised the standard of revolt against the Turks. That news meant the opening of a new chapter in the politics of modern Europe.

The "Eastern Question" has taken different forms at different times. In one sense it has existed ever since the Ottoman Turks encamped in Europe. In another it dates from the Treaty of Kutchuk—Kainardji (1774); in a third—the more generally accepted sense—it may be said to open with the Greek Revolt of 1821.

For four hundred years the Greeks had submitted, almost without a murmur, to the yoke imposed upon them by their Moslem conquerors; as a nation they had long ceased to exist; as a people they were almost blotted out. And now, to all appearance suddenly and without preparation, and certainly without warning of any kind, the silence of centuries was broken, and the Greeks, uprising on every side, raised the standard of an insurrection which was not subdued until they had once again asserted their right to a place in the European Commonwealth as a recognised and virtually independent nation. The heroic knight-errantry of Church and the poetic enthusiasm of Byron have—for Englishmen at least—cast over the Greek revolt a glamour which historical criticism finds it diffi-

cult to dispel. Stripped bare of sentiment, and related in sober historic prose, the story reveals an extraordinarily confused medley of ignominy and glory, of conspicuous heroism and consummate cowardice, of sordid self-seeking and splendid self-sacrifice.

But whatever the character of the leaders, and whatever the conduct of the people, the movement itself was of first-rate importance in the history of modern Europe. One illusion must be dispelled at once. Only in a partial sense was the rising sudden, and in no sense was it unprepared. Many things combined to render possible and even probable a revival of Greek nationality: the large measure of local autonomy permitted and even encouraged by the Porte; the existence of a local Christian militia; the conspicuous success of the Greeks in commerce, and their rapid accumulation of wealth; the maintenance of maritime activity; a marked intellectual revival in the last years of the eighteenth century; and above all, the continued vitality of a Church strong in the devotion of its parish priests and intensely nationalist in sympathies. The events of the French Revolution profoundly stirred the Greek mind, and in 1814 the secret society of the Philike Hetairia was formed with the avowed object of expelling the Ottomans from Europe and re-establishing the Byzantine Empire. The char-

acter, the influence, and the political significance of this famous society, have been very variously estimated by different writers; but there can be no reasonable doubt that it was the existence of the Philike Hetairia which gave unity and cohesion to the loose and scattered aspirations, by which so many Greeks were animated in the early years of the nineteenth century.

It was under the impulse derived from this society, and from the recent insurrectionary movements in Spain and in Southern Italy, that the Greek revolt began. The opportunity was found in the pre-occupation of the Porte in regard to the successful insurrection of Ali Pasha of Albania. In March, 1821, a band of Greeks, under the leadership of Prince Alexander Hypsilanti, raised the standard of revolt in Moldavia. Moldavia was, no doubt, selected as the scene of the initial rising in the hope of enlisting the sympathy and, perhaps, the assistance of Alexander of Russia. But the Czar's position was embarrassing. As Emperor of Russia, as head of the Greek Church, as the patron of the Slav nationality, as the hereditary foe of Turkey, as a member of the Tilsit conspiracy, as the advocate of Turkish dismemberment, he was impelled to the championship of Greek independence. But, on the other hand, as the associate and partner of Prince Metternich, as the head and director of the European "police system," as

the joint-repressor of liberal movements, above all, as the founder of the Holy Alliance, he was the sworn foe of revolution wherever it might rear its ungainly head. At the Czar's side as Foreign Minister was Capodistrias, the obvious and the destined champion of Greek nationality. But any doubts as to the Czar's attitude were quickly set at rest. A proclamation was issued in which Hypsilanti and his companions were ordered to repair immediately to Russia and there await the good pleasure of Alexander; while the Moldavians were bidden to return at once to their obedience to their legitimate rulers as the only means by which they might escape the punishment which the Imperial Court would inflict upon all who persisted in aiding the revolt. Without help from Russia, the movement in Moldavia had no hope of success, and in June, 1821, it entirely collapsed.

The Moldavian rising was a mere flash in the pan. Far different was the character of the movement which, almost simultaneously, manifested itself in the Morea, and in the islands of the Ægean. The Turks were taken wholly unprepared, and the rebels were repeatedly victorious in the field. On both sides the struggle was conducted with horrible ferocity. The murder of the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople was followed by a wholesale massacre of the Christian population in Macedonia and Asia

Minor. Amid these atrocities it was impossible for the Czar to stand aloof. Moreover, Russia had grievances of her own against the Porte apart from the question of Greece or the outrages upon Christian ecclesiastics. Russian ships had been fired upon in the Dardanelles, and the Turks, in defiance of Treaty obligations, instead of restoring the rule of the Hospodars, continued to administer Moldavia and Wallachia by martial law. Accordingly, in July, 1821, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed to present the following demands and to require an answer within eight days:—

1st. That the Greek Churches, destroyed or plundered, should be immediately restored and rendered fit for the celebration of Divine worship.

2nd. That the Christian Religion should be restored to its prerogatives by granting it the same protection it formerly enjoyed, and by guaranteeing its inviolability for the future, thus to console Europe in some degree for the murder of the Patriarch.

3rd. That an equitable distinction should be made between the innocent and the guilty, and a prospect of peace held out

to those Greeks who should hereafter submit within a given time.

And lastly, that the Turkish Government should enable Russia, by virtue of existing treaties, to contribute to the pacification of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia.

Agreeing to these terms was "the only means," it was stated, "by which the Turks would be able to avoid their utter ruin." As the answer was not forthcoming within the specified time, the Ambassador demanded his passports, and war between the two Powers seemed imminent.

What was the attitude of the other Powers towards this further development of the Eastern Question?

France was fully occupied at the moment with the affairs of Spain; but both Austria and Great Britain were anxious to avert war between Russia and Turkey. In the fate of the Greeks, neither Metternich nor Castlereagh was specially interested; but both Statesman laboured with assiduity to prevent the re-opening of the whole Eastern Question in the form which a Russo-Turkish war would necessitate. They therefore brought all possible pressure to bear upon the Porte to induce the latter to agree with its adversary quickly. Alexander was not anxious to push matters to extremities; the Porte was

induced to yield a point and to evacuate the Danubian Principalities; war was for the time being averted; and Metternich could congratulate himself upon another signal triumph for Austrian diplomacy.

The time was now approaching for the reopening of the European Congress. The results of the Laibach meeting had been so entirely satisfactory to the august Allies that the Conference, on the conclusion of its first session, was adjourned and not dissolved. It re-assembled at Verona in September, 1822. But before it met, an event fraught with momentous consequences to European diplomacy had taken place. Lord Castlereagh had arranged to attend the Conference in person, but in the very midst of preparations for his departure he was seized with the illness which led to his death, and before many weeks his sceptre had passed into the hands of Canning.

Before his fatal "seizure," Castlereagh had drawn up, for his own guidance at the Congress, a memorandum, which had been approved by his colleagues and the King.* This memorandum goes far to vindicate Castlereagh's reputation as a statesman, and to prove the essential identity of his policy with that by which Canning has won undying fame. Castlereagh, as I have hinted, has been hardly judged. "Two more

* 'Wellington Despatches' (Supplementary), vol. i. 285.

years of life, two more years of change, in the relations of England to the Continent, would have given Castlereagh," as Mr. Fyffe justly remarks, "a different figure in the history both of Greece and America." *

But whatever the merits of Castlereagh, and however much historical research may tend to vindicate his memory and to dissipate damaging preconceptions, popular instinct is unquestionably right in regarding Canning's succession to the Foreign Office as inaugurating a new era in English policy.

Canning, on taking office, was immediately confronted by two problems of first-rate importance: the Greek insurrection and the affairs of Spain and her South American Colonies. To these was subsequently added a third: the position of the House of Braganza in Portugal and Brazil. It was the Spanish question upon which the deliberations of the diplomatists at Verona were chiefly concentrated, and which was the first therefore to demand Canning's attention.

(b) *Old and New Spain.*

In no country in Europe had the royalist reaction been more violent or unrestrained than in Spain. Ferdinand VII. was personally one of

* 'History of Modern Europe,' ii. 211.

the most contemptible of men, a weak compound of bigotry, sensualism and superstition. But in 1814 he was welcomed back to the throne of his fathers with limitless enthusiasm. Without a moment's delay he embarked upon the work of "restoration." The Cortes of 1812 were dissolved; the Inquisition was restored; the nobles were reinstated in all their old oppressive privileges; the Jesuits flocked back in crowds; and all the adherents of the Bonapartist régime were persecuted with relentless severity. Even for Spain the reaction was too violent. The royalist reign of terror provoked resistance. The provinces were soon honeycombed with secret societies, largely recruited from the army. Isolated revolts were crushed with barbarous cruelty, and for six years the terror reigned supreme. But in 1820 the flag of revolution was unfurled, and Ferdinand, as despicably feeble as he was cruel, gave way. From one extreme the Spaniards characteristically rushed to the other. The Constitution of 1812 was restored; the Cortes was summoned; a Liberal ministry was installed in office; the monasteries were dissolved; the Inquisition was suppressed, and rapid progress was made with an ambitious programme of radical reform. The moderates of both parties were pushed aside and a factious combination of radicals and reactionaries prevented the establishment of a constitutional régime.

France, meanwhile, was burning to interfere in Spain on behalf of the Spanish Bourbons. A terrible outbreak of yellow fever in Spain gave France the excuse for massing an army of 100,000 men on the Pyrenean frontier for the purpose of establishing a *Cordon Sanitaire*. But Alexander of Russia was also anxious to have a finger in the Spanish pie. The Russian army was bitterly disappointed that it was not to be let loose upon the Turks. Some compensation for its enforced inaction in the East might, perhaps, be found in employment in Spain. This suggestion placed Metternich on the horns of a dilemma. That the condition of Spain demanded the interference of the Allies he could not decently deny; but at the same time he could hardly contemplate with equanimity the march of 150,000 Russian troops into Western Europe, and their establishment as an army of observation in Piedmont.

Meanwhile, the Congress of 1822 had assembled first at Vienna and later at Verona. The French representative, M. de Montmorency, formally propounded to his colleagues the following embarrassing queries:

I. "In case France should find herself under the necessity of recalling her Minister from Madrid, and of breaking off all diplomatic relations with Spain, would the high courts be disposed to adopt

the like measures, and to recall their respective missions?"

II. "Should war break out between France and Spain, under what form, and by what acts, would the high powers afford to France, that moral support which would give to her measures the weight and authority of the Alliance, and inspire a salutary dread in the revolutionists of all countries?"

III. "What, in short, was the intention of the high powers, as to the extent and the form of the effective assistance (*secours matériels*) which they would be disposed to give to France in case active interference should, on her demand, become necessary?"

The Czar Alexander was ready with his answer in the shape of 150,000 men; but this suggestion, as we have seen, did not please Metternich. Still less was it agreeable to Canning.

Canning was determined to resist with all his might the principle of concerted intervention in the domestic affairs of independent States. By the mouth of Wellington, who on Castlereagh's death had gone in his place to Verona, Canning bluntly told the Powers that "there was no sympathy and would be none between England and revolutionists and Jacobins," but that

England did emphatically insist on "the right of nations to set up over themselves whatever form of Government they thought best, and to be left free to manage their own affairs so long as they left other nations to manage theirs." Further: the Duke was instructed in the event of the adoption of any resolution in favour of joint intervention in Spain; "Come what might, to refuse the King's consent to become a party to it, even if the dissolution of the Alliance should be the result of the refusal." "It was in truth," as Stapleton justly observes, "high time to convince the members of the Alliance that England would take whatever course she thought right, independently of their will and pleasure; for, to such a pitch of confidence had they arrived, that only two days before this despatch was written, the Ministers of the *four Courts* called in a body on Mr. Canning, to remonstrate with him against the appointment of Sir William à Court as the King's Minister to Madrid, on account of the countenance that his presence would give to the Constitutional Government." Needless to say that Canning treated this impertinent request with good-natured contempt.

At Verona the Duke of Wellington's emphatic protest was successful in preventing joint intervention in Spain. "All notion of what is called an European army," he wrote on October 18, "is at an end." But two dangers still remained:

first, the danger of a French attack; and secondly, the danger that the armed intervention of France would be supported by diplomatic pressure from the Allies. Canning could boast with justice that the primary and "immediate object of England had been accomplished," that we had been able to "hinder the impress of a joint character from being affixed to the war—if war there must be—with Spain; to take care that the war should not grow out of an assumed jurisdiction of the Congress;" but more than this neither Wellington nor Canning could accomplish. The allies agreed that their respective ministers "at Madrid should present a separate note of the same tenor and drawn up on the same principles," and that in the event of the French minister being withdrawn from Madrid, the ambassadors of the other Powers should be withdrawn at the same time. Against this decision Wellington entered one more firm but ineffectual protest.* "His Majesty's Government are of opinion that to animadvert upon the internal transactions of an independent State, unless such transactions affect the essential interests of his Majesty's subjects, is inconsistent with those principles on which his Majesty has invariably acted in all questions relating to the internal concerns of other countries; that such animadversions, if made, must involve his Majesty

* See 'Despatches,' vol. i. p. 559.

in serious responsibility if they should produce any effect, and must irritate if they should not; and that if addressed, as proposed, to the Spanish Government, are likely to be injurious to her best interests, and to produce the worst consequences upon the probable discussions between France and Spain. The King's government must, therefore, decline to advise his Majesty to hold a common language with his Allies upon this occasion." Unless England were prepared to declare war upon the Allied Powers in the interests of one of the many conflicting parties in Spain, or rather, perhaps, in defence of the non-intervention principle, there was for the moment no more to be done—in Europe. But acting on a hint from Louis XVIII. dropped to the Duke of Wellington, on his way home through Paris, Canning made one more effort to avert war between France and Spain. A special mission was despatched to Spain; not as from the Government of England, but from one of her own Grandees: from the man to whom Spain owed her independent national existence: from the great Duke himself. The object was to induce the Spaniards to come to an amicable settlement with their own sovereign, and thus avoid foreign intervention. But the attempt came too late; the French Ambassador was withdrawn from Madrid; the other ambassadors, in accordance with the agreement of Verona, also left Spain;

and at the opening of the French Chambers in 1823, Louis XVIII. addressed the members in words that have become historic: "One hundred thousand Frenchmen, commanded by a prince of my family, by him whom my heart delights to call my son, are ready to march, invoking the God of St. Louis, for the sake of preserving the throne of Spain to a descendant of Henry IV., of saving that fine kingdom from its ruin, and of reconciling it with Europe. . . . If war is inevitable I will use my utmost efforts to confine its circle, and to limit its duration; it will be undertaken only to conquer peace which the state of Spain would make impossible. Let Ferdinand VII. be free to give to his people the institutions which they cannot hold but from him, and which by securing their tranquillity would dissipate the just inquietudes of France. Hostilities shall cease from that moment. I make, gentlemen, before you a solemn engagement on that point."*

This extraordinary speech re-echoed the very language of the Laibach Circular that "changes in the administration of States ought only to emanate from the intelligent and well-weighed conviction of those whom God has rendered responsible for power." With almost sublime impudence, the French King's speech was officially communicated to Canning, with the expression of a hope that peace might still be pre-

* Quoted in Stapleton's 'Life of Canning,' i. 249.

served, and that success might crown "the good services of the British Government in producing that accommodation."

Canning still declined to abandon the hope of peace; but he declared with emphasis that our efforts to that end could only be continued if France were willing to repudiate the obvious sense of the King's speech. If, on the other hand, the speech meant (what is said) that "the free institutions of the Spanish people could only be legitimately held from the spontaneous gift of the Sovereign first restored to absolute power, and then divesting himself of such portion of that power as he might think proper to part with," then it was a principle "to which the Spanish nation could not be expected to subscribe, nor could any British statesmen uphold or defend it." Nor could the British Government advise any people "in adopting changes, however beneficial, to admit the principle on which (according to this latter construction) the speech of the King of France would be understood to prescribe them. It was, indeed, a principle which struck at the root of the British Constitution." "The British Government does not presume to hold out its own political institutions as the only practical system of national happiness and freedom. It does not presume to question the freedom and happiness which France enjoys under institutions emanating

from the will of the Sovereign, and described as *octroyées* from the throne. But it could not countenance a pretention on the part of France to make her example a rule for other nations, and still less could it admit a peculiar right in France to force that example specifically on Spain, in virtue of the consanguinity of the reigning dynasties of those two kingdoms. This latter reason would, on the contrary, suggest recollections and considerations, which must obviously make it impossible for Great Britain to be the advocate for pretensions founded on it."

The reference to the Family Compacts shows the touch of the diplomatic artist. But no skill or firmness could avert war, and on April 6, 1823, the Duc d' Angoulême at the head of one hundred thousand men crossed the Bidassoa.

It is unnecessary to follow the fortunes of the Franco-Spanish war. It is enough to say that within a few months Ferdinand was restored to his throne and his authority, and that the French troops remained in occupation of Spain until 1827. Their presence relieved Ferdinand of the last shred of responsibility to his people, and enabled him to take a terrible vengeance on his opponents. Against the barbarous cruelties which he practised upon them, even his protector, the Duc d'Angoulême, protested; but protested in vain.

To the European concert Old Spain was a matter of the highest concern; Great Britain, on the other hand, was far more interested in the condition of New Spain. And it was there that Canning found the card with which to trump the trick of the Holy Allies.

"Was there no other mode of resistance?" asked Canning in reviewing these events in 1826, "than by a direct attack upon France, or by a war to be undertaken on the soil of Spain? What if the possession of Spain might be rendered harmless in other hands—harmless as regarded us—and valueless to the possessors. Might not compensation for disparagement be obtained, and the policy of our ancestors vindicated, by means better adapted to the present time? If France occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation, that we should blockade Cadiz? No. I looked another way—I sought materials of compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain *with the Indies*. I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old."

The language is a trifle magniloquent; but the fact which it emphasised was of unquestioned significance. The latter day history of the South American Republics has not tended to exalt them

in the eyes of commercial nations; but the recognition of their independence by Canning was not only a singularly effective counterstroke to the policy of the Holy Alliance, but was of great importance to the trading interests of this country.

Ever since Napoleon's intrusion into Spanish politics the condition of affairs in South America had been going steadily from bad to worse. Every year it became more and more obvious that Spain was incapable of governing her vast empire in the new world; every year the anarchy in the colonies became more pronounced; and the injuries thereby inflicted upon English trade more and more intolerable. A conflict between Spain and the United States had been averted in 1817 by the sale of the Floridas to the latter for the sum of five million dollars. Relieved of one source of weakness, and provided with a little ready money, Spain made one more effort to grapple with her Colonial problem. But Old Spain was too far gone, and the effort served only to bring to a head the insurrectionary movement at home.

The position of England in regard to Old and New Spain respectively was one of some delicacy, not to say embarrassment. It is graphically depicted in a letter from Canning to Sir Charles Bagot (January 3, 1823): "We . . . are in a course of amicable and furious correspondence with

Spain; amicable so far as relates to Europe in which quarter of the world we defend her against invasion; furious in relation to America where we have a squadron now employed in seeking forcible redress for grievances. To keep these two strains operating simultaneously upon the nerves and feelings of the Spaniards; to hold a shield before them with one hand and to punish them with the other, has been and still is a matter of no small delicacy and difficulty. But I hope we may manage it."

In Europe Canning's "management" failed; in South America it succeeded perhaps beyond his expectations. But meantime the commercial interests of Great Britain were suffering severely. From Spain we could obtain no satisfaction for outrages unnumbered; from the Spanish colonies we could not demand it. "The archives of the British Mission at Madrid contained a long list of such grievances, sometimes justified or palliated by the Spanish Ministers, sometimes admitted and regretted, but in no one instance satisfactorily redressed. The mere existence of such a catalogue of injuries committed against the subjects of a friendly Power, and that Power the one to whose exertions and sacrifices the Spanish Monarchy owed its preservation, was as discreditable to the Government which had inflicted or connived at them, as it would have been to that which, after having exhausted every amicable

effort to obtain justice, should have continued patiently to submit to the denial of it." *

In 1821 matters were brought to a head. A Spanish privateer captured a British vessel, the *Lord Collingwood*, and carried her into Porto Rico. The Spanish Government justified the capture on the ground that the vessel was "found trading with the rebels of Buenos Ayres." On October 18, 1823, therefore, our ambassador was instructed to demand "instant atonement." No redress was forthcoming. The case of the *Lord Collingwood* was only one of hundreds; and Canning therefore expressed the opinion that "neither the pride, nor the interests, nor, after a fair time allowed for the effect of representations, the patience of this country ought any longer to bear such outrages."

Orders were accordingly issued to British commanders in the Southern Seas to have recourse to reprisals: "to land wherever . . . the haunts of the pirates were to be discovered, and to take signal vengeance for the outrages which had in so many instances been committed by them against the commerce, persons, and lives of his Majesty's subjects." The step was a strong one; but it was clearly justified on the ground of the "growing magnitude of the evil and the evident want on the part of the Spanish Government either of the will or the power

* Stapleton, iii. 167.

to suppress it." And stronger steps were to follow.

Spain was a negligable quantity; but France was not. And France had for some time been manifesting suspicion and jealousy of English relations with the Spanish colonies. In 1823 there were ugly rumours that France intended to extend her intervention from the Old Spain to the New. Such intervention England could not permit. "I confess I long to tell M. de Villèle (were this the moment) that we *will* trade with the late Spanish-American colonies, whether France likes it or not; that we will not respect the Spanish *guarda costas*, which attempt to interdict that trade to us; and that, if France sends a large fleet to help the *guarda costas*, we will send a larger to watch (at least) their operations. The truth seems to be that having got the three Continental Powers at their back the use which M. de Villèle intends to make of them with Spain is not against Spain but against us. He will say, or probably has said to Spain: "See, we have all Europe ready to fall upon you. We can crush you in a moment; but give up all connection with England and we will spare you; nay, more, we will help you to do her and her commerce all manner of harm."

So Canning had written to Wellington on December 13, 1822. In the same month the Spanish Government was informed of the in-

tention of Great Britain to send consuls to the several provinces of Spanish America to protect the British trade in those countries. Before the end of 1823 most of the consuls were appointed, and on their way to their respective stations. At the same time, special commissioners were sent out to Columbia and Mexico to report on the political situation.

Meanwhile, in October, 1823, France was informed with great frankness of the settled policy of Great Britain in regard to South America. Briefly stated, it came to this: the recovery of the colonies by Spain seemed to be hopeless; if Spain thought otherwise, by all means let her try! We had no designs upon those colonies ourselves, but the world in general and France in particular must clearly understand (i.) that if Spain could not subdue the colonies herself, no other Power would be allowed to do it for her; (ii.) that England "could not wait indefinitely," and "could not consent to make its recognition of the New States *dependent* upon that of Spain"; (iii.) that Spain's "pretension to interdict all trade with these colonies" was in our opinion obsolete, and, even if maintained against other Powers, could not (under the Treaty of 1810) be enforced against us; (iv.) that we would not submit our claims to a European congress. Canning had reason for mistrusting the action of congresses, and expressed his

mistrust to Bagot. "We protested at Laibach; we remonstrated at Verona. Our protest was treated as waste paper; our remonstrances mingled with the air." Though France did not like Canning's communication, she made no official protest; and help came to us from an important but unexpected quarter. The United States (to whose Minister a similar communication had been made) offered effective support to Canning's doctrines. On December 2, 1823, President Monroe sent to Congress the famous message in which he declared "that any interference on the part of the Great Powers of Europe for the purpose of oppressing or controlling the destiny of the Spanish American States, which had declared their Independence, would be dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States, and would be considered as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards them." Such was the historic origin of a "doctrine" of which a good deal has recently been heard.

Spain made one further but unavailing effort to retain by diplomacy what she could no longer retain by force. At her request a Conference took place in Paris between the ambassadors of the Continental Powers; but Great Britain held aloof, and nothing came of it. On January 1, 1825, the Powers were informed that Great Britain had at last recognised the independence of "those countries of America which appear to

have established their separation from Spain," viz. Buenos Ayres, Columbia, and Mexico. "It cannot be concealed," as Canning said, "that we have hurt many feelings, run against many interests, shocked many prejudices, and caused many regrets; but it is my sanguine hope that we shall remain with our point gained, and the peace of the world undisturbed." Canning's hope was in one sense amply fulfilled. Our point was gained, and without war. The Courts of Austria, Prussia, and Russia expressed their deep regret at our action, "since it gave a final blow to the interests of Spain in the New World, and tended to encourage the revolutionary spirit which it had been found so difficult to restrain in Europe." With or without the intervention of England, the interests of Spain in America were probably doomed; but was there no force in the latter part of the complaint? It is true that there has been an immense development of commercial intercourse between England and South America, and that English capital has there found profitable, if precarious, employment; but can it be denied that these results have been secured at the expense of our "encouragement to the revolutionary spirit" manifesting itself on an enormous scale? To this question the history of the South American Republics during the last half century must be allowed for itself to reply.

Over the Holy Allies Canning had won a signal victory; and for their protests he cared nothing. England must, as he said, "move steadily on in her own orbit, without looking too nicely to the conduct of the Powers in alliance with her; must be content with her own glory, and by its example excite other nations to arrive at the same advantages which her peculiar system has bestowed upon her."

Not so lightly could he disregard the opinions of his own colleagues. And those opinions were far from being unanimous. Wellington, in particular, was strongly opposed to Canning's Spanish policy. Canning threatened resignation. This disaster however was averted by the tact of the Prime Minister and the submission of the Cabinet. Canning therefore remained in office to deal with two other questions of the first magnitude, that of Portugal and that of Greece.

(c) *Canning and Portugal.*

Canning's policy in regard to Portugal was not less prompt and emphatic than his policy towards Spain. The situation in Portugal, though serious and complicated, was not devoid of elements of humour. Napoleon, as we have seen, had, in 1807, issued an edict that the "House of Braganza had ceased to reign." The royal family had, however, made their escape in

time, and had transferred the seat of government to Brazil. After the Restoration, the former Regent, now King John VI., declined to return to Europe. But he appointed as Regent Lord Beresford, the former commander of the English troops in Portugal, and proclaimed the union of the Portuguese dominions under the title of the "United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil, and the Algarves." Portugal thus became to all intents and purposes a dependency of Brazil. This naturally caused a considerable amount of discontent, and the Spanish Revolution of 1820 brought matters to a head. The Regency was deposed; a Provisional Government was established; and John VI. was persuaded to return reluctantly to Lisbon. His son, Don Pedro, was left as Regent in Brazil, and was instructed at all hazards to preserve Brazil to the House of Braganza; "and in case of any unforeseen circumstances which should make the continuance of the union between Portugal and Brazil impracticable . . . to place the crown upon his own head, and to take especial care that it was not left to fall upon the head of an adventurer." The King's precaution was justified. The Brazilians, in 1822, declined to submit to the orders of the Cortes at home; declared their country independent; and proclaimed Don Pedro as Constitutional Emperor. Meanwhile, in Portugal things swayed from one side to the

other. In 1821, John VI. contentedly accepted a Liberal Constitution. But, in 1823, the reactionary contagion reached Portugal from Spain; the Queen (herself a Spanish Bourbon) and her second son, Don Miguel, strongly favoured the reaction; the King was compelled to yield; a new ministry took office, and absolutism was once more triumphant.

A fierce diplomatic struggle then ensued at Lisbon; the English party being supported by M. de Palmella, the Foreign Minister; the French by M. de Subsérra, the Prime Minister. The former immediately applied to Great Britain for the "aid of a body of troops to give strength and stability to the Government" of Portugal. No petition could have been more embarrassing to Canning. He was unwilling to refuse the request of a Government connected by so many ties with our own; but to accede to it would have been a direct contravention of the principles which we had long, though unsuccessfully, urged upon the absolutist Courts of the Continent. Moreover, there was not a single regiment in England available for foreign service. The demand for soldiers was, therefore, refused: but a squadron was despatched to the Tagus "to confirm in the eyes of the Portuguese nation the strict intimacy and good will subsisting between the two Crowns. The expedient adopted had two obvious advantages: the British ships would

afford 'a certain asylum' to the King were his life endangered, but they were not capable of being employed as an instrument of domestic police, or as an agent in civil discussions."

The ships were found useful when, in April, 1824, Don Miguel effected a *coup d'état* in the reactionary interest, arrested the leading ministers, and virtually superseded his father. John VII. went on board the *Windsor Castle* and from that vantage ground succeeded in re-establishing his authority. The struggle between the English and French parties went on for another twelve months; but in 1825 Canning won a distinct diplomatic victory. He got the most prominent Gallophils deposed, and he had the further and great satisfaction of bringing about a final settlement of the dangerous and long-standing difficulty between Portugal and Brazil.

On August 29, 1825, a treaty was signed in which John IV. "recognized Brazil to hold the name of an independent Empire . . . and his best beloved son Don Pedro as Emperor." The old king was, under this arrangement, to retain during his lifetime the imperial title. But he survived the settlement only six months. On his death the Emperor Pedro renounced his rights of succession to the throne of Portugal in favour of his daughter the Infanta Maria, thus completing the severance between the two crowns. The Infanta was a child of seven; but,

with a view of reconciling irreconcilables the poor child was betrothed to her uncle Don Miguel. The partizans of Miguel were not inclined to wait; the old factions broke out again; the reactionaries applied for help to Spain; the Regency in despair appealed to England. The demand for succour reached Canning on December 3, 1826. He waited only for confirmation of the action of Spain. This reached him on Friday, December 8. On Monday the 12th, he was able to announce to Parliament that troops were on their way to Portugal. Not a moment had been lost:

"The precise information, on which we alone could act, arrived only on Friday last. On Saturday the decision of the Government was taken, on Sunday we obtained the sanction of his Majesty, on Monday we came down to Parliament, and at this very hour, while I have the honour of addressing this House, British troops are on their way to Portugal!"

The speech in which Canning vindicated to Parliament—and to the world—the action of the Cabinet was perhaps the most eloquent, certainly the most effective, he ever made. While ruthlessly exposing the shuffling and equivocating conduct of Spain he still expressed his anxious desire for peace: for the war, if war should come, will be a war, "not so much of armies as of opinions." "It is," he exclaimed, "a

war of opinion that Spain is now waging against Portugal; it is a war which is commenced in hatred of the new institutions of Portugal. . . . If into that war this country shall be compelled to enter, we shall enter into it, with a sincere and anxious desire to mitigate, rather than exasperate, and to mingle only in the conflict of arms, not in the more fatal conflict of opinions. But I much fear that this country (however earnestly she may endeavour to avoid it) could not, in such case, avoid seeing ranked under her banners all the restless and dissatisfied of any nation with which she might come in conflict. It is the contemplation of this new power in any future war which excites my most anxious apprehension. It is one thing to have a giant's strength, it would be another to use it like a giant."

Canning's words re-echoed throughout Europe; and bitterly as they were resented by the absolutist Courts, they produced their intended effect. Spain at once desisted from any further encouragement to the Portguese reactionaries; France condemned the whole enterprise as immoral and insane; the Portuguese, backed by the presence of a British squadron in the Tagus, drove back the invaders with ease, and the Liberal Constitution was saved. It cannot be doubted that Canning's bold words and prompt action had nipped in the bud a movement which might

easily, if paltered with, have developed into a general and sanguinary war. He had thus done an admirable service not to Portugal only, nor to England, but to Europe at large. But he was never ashamed to confess that it was the interests of England which were his primary concern:

"The language of modern philosophy is widely and diffusely benevolent; it professes the perfection of our species and the amelioration of the lot of all mankind. Gentlemen, I hope that my heart beats as high for the general interests of humanity, I hope I have as friendly a disposition towards the other nations of the earth as anyone who vaunts his philanthropy most highly, but I am contented to confess that in the conduct of political affairs, the grand object of my contemplation is the interest of England. Not, gentlemen, that the interest of England is an interest which stands isolated and alone. The situation which she holds forbids an exclusive selfishness. Her prosperity must contribute to the prosperity of surrounding nations and her stability to the safety of the world." *

These were the principles on which Canning had acted in regard to Spain and the Spanish Colonies; these were the principles which inspired his policy towards Portugal and Brazil; these were the principles which he was again

* *Cf.* speech at Plymouth, 1823.

to apply to a solution of the complex Eastern problem.

(d) *Canning and the Eastern Question.*

On April 4, 1826, eight months before the despatch of the expedition to Lisbon, England and Russia had signed a protocol for the settlement of the quarrel between Turkey and Greece.

We have already sketched the history of the Greek insurrection down to the death of Lord Castlereagh. At the time when Canning took office the position of affairs was as follows. The initial rising of the Greeks under Prince Hypsilanti in Moldavia had collapsed; the Czar of Russia, so far from encouraging, had sternly condemned the enterprise, and Hypsilanti himself was a prisoner. But, foiled in Moldavia, the Greeks had risen in the Morea and the Ægean Islands, and had there met with a very different measure of success. Taken unawares, the Turks held their own with difficulty in the fortresses, and in the open country were disastrously defeated.

But, meanwhile, serious disputes had arisen between Turkey and Russia. Though provoked in one sense by the Greek revolt, and though proceeding concurrently for seven or eight years with it, this quarrel with Russia never actually merged in the conflict with Greece, and ought

strictly to be treated apart from it. The Czar Alexander, and in a less degree, the Czar Nicholas always regarded the Greeks as rebels; morally indistinguishable from the rebels in Spain, in Portugal and in Naples, and as such to be left to their deserved fate. But although Alexander "discerned the revolutionary march in the troubles of the Peloponnese" he had his own quarrel with the Turk.

By the Treaty of Kainardji (1774), Russia had acquired the right of commercial navigation in the Black Sea; had become virtually the protector of the Danubian Principalities, and had assumed certain obligations in regard to the Greek Church in Constantinople and elsewhere. These latter were ill-defined and highly disputable. In 1821 Russian susceptibilities were, as we have seen, aroused on each of these three points, and war between the two powers was only averted by timely though partial submission on the part of Turkey, and by the anxiety of Metternich and the Czar to give no sort of encouragement to the Greek rebels.

Between 1822 and 1826 events moved rapidly in South Eastern Europe, and more and more tended to bring the two movements, in their origin technically distinct—the Greek revolt and the Russian disputes with Turkey—into closer and eventually inextricable relations.

From the beginning to the close of his reign

at the Foreign Office, Canning pursued a clearly defined and consistent policy in regard to the Eastern Question. He was far from insensible to the claims of the Greeks. On the contrary, he was ardently desirous that they should succeed in throwing off the yoke they had borne so long. Nor was he, in any sense, a Russophil. He was strongly opposed to the establishment of Russia on the Dardanelles, or to the dismemberment of Turkey in her favour. From first to last his object was to induce the Porte to grant terms to the Greeks, and so prevent Russia from utilizing the situation as a means to her own territorial aggrandizement. Above all, he was anxious to assert what he believed to be the legitimate interests of Great Britain in the Eastern Question, and to compel Russia to recognize those interests in any final settlement. So long as he lived he firmly retained control of the situation; but his untimely death, and the weakness and timidity of his immediate successors, went far to neutralize the effects of his consistent policy and allowed Russia to pluck single-handed the fruits of her victories in the field.

To return to the history of the Greek Revolt. During 1822 and 1823 the Greeks more than held their own against the Porte. In 1822 the Turks captured the island of Chios and put its inhabitants to the sword; but they paid dearly

for their victory, the flower of their fleet being destroyed by the Greek fire-ships. A determined attempt to re-assert their position in the Morea was equally unsuccessful; the Greeks reduced the citadels of Athens and Corinth, compelled the Turks to surrender Nauplia and to raise the first siege of Missolonghi. Despite fierce internecine feuds among the rebel leaders, the Porte could make no headway against them. Moreover, the struggle of the Greeks, despite time-serving treachery and sordid self-seeking, despite personal jealousies and atrocities unnumbered, had in it something of the heroic which could not fail to attract generous sympathy. The august Allies might decide at Verona that the Greeks were rebels, and must be left to their fate; but the peoples of Europe, and particularly the English people, were of a different mind. The efforts of Lord Byron, Lord Cathcart, General Church and others, aroused an intensely Phil-Hellenist sentiment among them, and volunteers flocked in their thousands to the assistance of the Greeks, not from England only, but from Germany, from France and from the United States. Considerable subscriptions were raised in their behalf; success attended their arms, and a growing interest in their political fate manifested itself among the Powers. But the year 1824 seemed, notwithstanding, likely to prove a fatal turning point for the Greeks. In

April, 1824, Byron perished in the swamps of Missolonghi, and in July the Turks captured the island of Ipsara. Though the latter victory was neutralised by the success of the Greek fleet at Mitylene, events were taking place elsewhere destined to put a new complexion on the whole struggle.

Mehemet Ali, the great vassal-ruler of Egypt, had no mind to see the dismemberment of an Empire which might some day be his own. His step-son, Ibrahim Pasha, was accordingly despatched at the head of a powerful force, and in April, 1824, captured and occupied Crete, with the intention of using it as a base of operations against the insurgent islands of the Ægean. From Crete, early in 1825, Ibrahim crossed to the Morea, and landed at Modon, at the head of a force of nearly twenty thousand men. The disciplined Egyptian troops carried all before them. Tripolitza and Navarino were taken, and Ibrahim, "hurrying, devastating and slaughtering in all directions," advanced through the Morea. While the Egyptians attacked from the south-west, the Turks delivered their assault on the north-west. The two forces converged on the devoted Missolonghi. In April, 1825, Redschid Pasha invested the town by land and sea. Again and again the assault was delivered; again and again it was repelled. Redschid himself was in danger of being cut off by the Greek fleet; but

in November the Turkish forces were re-inforced by Ibrahim. The efforts of the Egyptians were as vain as those of the Turks; the besiegers still repelled every assault. At last, after more than six months of siege, the assault was abandoned, and the combined force of the besiegers sat down to a blockade. The heroic defenders were starved out; and in April, 1826, after a close investment of exactly a year, the whole population determined to make a sortie, and attempt, to cut their way through. On April 22, every man, woman and child—not physically disabled—assembled at the gates prepared for the last desperate sally; only the infirm were left behind. The vanguard cut their way through, and the gallant attempt seemed on the point of complete success, when, owing to a mistaken order, the force got divided, part advanced, part retired; of the former, some got through; the besiegers closed in upon the latter; hardly a man of them escaped; most of them died sword in hand; the rest set fire to the magazines and perished in the flames. Some three thousand women and children, the sole survivors of the siege, were carried off into slavery.

From Missolonghi the victors marched on Athens; Athens in its turn was besieged, and on June 2, 1827, despite the efforts of the Greeks themselves, and despite the assistance of Lord Cochrane, General Church and others, was com-

pelled to surrender. The Greek cause seemed desperate. Unless help were forthcoming from outside, the whole movement must collapse. In despair the Greeks formally placed themselves under British protection, and begged that Great Britain would send them a king. It was, of course, impossible to accede to the request, and Canning, though he received the Greek deputies with cordiality, made it clear to them that we could not depart from our attitude of strict, though benevolent, neutrality. This negotiation took place at the close of 1825. Just about the same time an event happened which profoundly modified the whole European situation.

On December 1, 1825, the Czar Alexander died suddenly in the Crimea, and after a short interval of uncertainty and confusion, was succeeded by his brother Nicholas. Nicholas was a man entirely opposed in taste and temper to his predecessor. Alexander was a curious mixture of shrewdness and sentiment; Nicholas had none of his Western veneer, and cherished none of his illusions; he was a Russian to the core. For the Greeks he cared as little as Alexander; but he was even more indisposed to allow the Porte to play fast and loose with Russia. The questions at issue between the two Courts were no nearer a satisfactory settlement than when, some three years before, Russia had broken off diplomatic relations with Constantinople. Lord Strangford,

the British Ambassador, had done all in his power to bring about a settlement of the dispute; but he had no sooner, with infinite labour, secured an adjustment on one point than another had been raised.

On the accession of the new Czar, Canning induced the Duke of Wellington to undertake a special mission to St. Petersburg. His object was twofold: (i.) to adjust, if possible, the outstanding difficulties between Russia and the Porte, and thus to avert the war, which at any moment in the last four years might have been regarded as imminent; and (ii.) to arrive at a common understanding with Russia on the Greek Question.

For it was hardly possible that the great Powers could much longer hold aloof. Metternich, indeed, never wavered for an instant from the attitude which he had from the first assumed: the Greeks were rebels against legitimate authority, and must be left to their fate. Prussia adhered to the policy of Austria. In France, however, the Phil-Hellenist sentiment was not powerless, and in England and Russia it might at any moment get beyond the control of the respective governments. More particularly was this the case after the intervention of Ibrahim Pasha in the Morea. Ibrahim has been described as a "savage;" and if he was not that, it must, at least, be admitted that his methods of warfare

were exceedingly repugnant to Western ideas. Moreover, an ugly rumour had got abroad that Ibrahim had formed a plan "to remove the whole Greek population, carrying them off into slavery into Egypt, or elsewhere, and to repeople the country with Egyptians and others of the Mahommedan religion." Canning regarded the rumour, first communicated to him by Prince Lieven, as incredible. But towards the end of 1825 he had appointed to the Embassy at Constantinople his cousin, Stratford Canning; a man destined to undying fame, in the annals of English diplomacy, as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. The first Reports sent home by the new ambassador were a cautious confirmation of Prince Lieven's account. "If the statements which had reached Mr. S. Canning were true, Ibrahim then acted on a system little short of extermination . . . and there was room to apprehend that many of his prisoners had been sent into Egypt as slaves, the children, it was asserted, being made to embrace the Mahommedan Faith."

Stratford Canning was instructed to satisfy himself as to the facts, and if they should correspond with the rumour, "to declare in the most distinct terms to the Porte that Great Britain would not permit the execution of a system of depopulation." More than that, a naval officer was to be despatched from the Mediterranean fleet direct to Ibrahim, and to

give "the Pasha distinctly to understand that unless he should in a written document distinctly disavow or formally renounce . . . the intention of converting the Morea into a Barbary State by transporting the population to Asia or Africa and replacing them by the population of those countries, effectual means would be taken to impede by the intervention of his Majesty's naval forces the accomplishment of so unwarrantable a project."

Meanwhile the Duke of Wellington had, with some difficulty, brought the Czar Nicholas into line with Canning's policy on the Greek Question; had secured his promise to "co-operate with Great Britain to prevent the execution of the designs imparted to Ibrahim Pasha;" and had concluded with him the Protocol of St. Petersburgh.

By this Treaty,* the two Powers renouncing any "augmentation of territory, any exclusive influence" or any superior commercial advantages for themselves, agreed to offer their mediation to the Porte. Greece, though continuing to pay tribute to the Porte, was to become a virtually independent State, to be governed by authorities chosen by itself, and to enjoy "entire liberty of conscience and commerce." To prevent collisions in the future, the Turks were to evacuate Greece, and the Greeks were

* Text in Stapleton, ii. 487.

to "purchase the property of the Turks . . . on the Grecian Continent or islands." This protocol, signed on April 4, 1826, must be regarded, as far as it goes, as a conspicuous triumph for Canning. And it went a long way to settle the Greek Question. But as to the outstanding questions between Turkey and Russia it did nothing; and it was on these that the mind of the Czar Nicholas was bent. Though professing his readiness to treat of the matter with Wellington, the Czar had already (March 17, 1826) despatched an ultimatum to the Porte. It demanded the immediate evacuation of the Principalities; the abandonment of the appointment of the "Beshlis" or police; and the instant despatch of the plenipotentiaries to the Russian frontier.

These demands the Porte was not in a position to refuse. For some time past the Sultan, Mahmoud II. had been contemplating a radical reform of his military system. The Janissaries resisted the reform, and in June, 1826, broke into open mutiny. For this the Sultan was prepared, and the Janissaries—the historic force upon which for centuries the Ottoman Sultans had depended—were cut down to a man. For the moment, therefore, there was nothing for it but submission to the terms of Russia; and on October 7, 1826, the Convention of Ackerman, in which those terms were embodied, was signed.

Meanwhile, Canning felt that the time had

come to translate into facts the principles asserted in the Petersburg Protocol. The Provisional Government of Greece had formally applied for the mediation of Great Britain, and in the autumn of 1826 England and Russia agreed to take common action in forcing their mediation upon the Porte. If the Sultan continued obdurate the two Powers agreed to intimate to him that "they would look to Greece with an eye of favour, and with a disposition to seize the first occasion of recognising as an independent State such portion of her territory as should have freed itself from Turkish dominion." In the meantime every effort was made to secure the adhesion of the other Powers to this policy. Prussia had no interest in the matter; but Prince Metternich left no stone unturned to frustrate the policy outlined in the Protocol. He even went so far as to use means at his disposal for creating mistrust between the English Court and the Foreign Office. His efforts were fortunately fruitless. France, on the other hand, expressed its cordial concurrence in Canning's policy, and in July, 1827, concluded with Russia and Great Britain the Treaty of London.

The public articles of this treaty were substantially identical with the terms of the Petersburg Protocol. On the basis of these terms the mediation of the contracting Powers was to be offered to the belligerents, and "an immediate

armistice" to be demanded. An additional and secret article provided that the Porte should be plainly informed that the Powers intend to take "immediate measures for an approximation with the Greeks"; and that if within one month "the Porte do not accept the armistice . . . or if the Greeks refuse to execute it" the High Contracting Powers should intimate to one or both parties that "they intend to exert all the means which circumstances may suggest to their prudence to obtain the immediate effect of the armistice . . . by preventing all collision between the contending parties . . . without, however, taking any part in the hostilities between them." It was further provided that "instructions conformable to the provisions above set forth" should be sent "to the admirals commanding their squadrons in the seas of the Levant."*

This treaty may be regarded as the crown of Canning's policy in regard to the Eastern Question. The principles of that policy are clear; the Powers could not ignore the struggle of Greece for independence: "a contest so ferocious (as Canning wrote to Lieven) leading to excesses of piracy and plunder, so intolerable to civilized Europe justifies extraordinary intervention, and renders lawful any expedients short of positive hostility." On the other hand, they could not consistently interfere by force;

* A full text in 'Annual Register' for 1827, pp. 403-405.

above all the Russian Czar must not be permitted to utilise the Greek struggle, for which he cared little, to attain objects for which he cared much. This policy is clearly reflected in the terms of the Treaty of London; but its practical application was not free from difficulty and ambiguity. The Porte was notorious for sullen obstinacy. How were the "high contracting parties" in the all too probable event of a refusal of an armistice by the Porte, to "prevent all collision between the contending parties without taking any part in the hostilities?" Either the matter had not been clearly thought out, or it was deliberately intended to leave the Gordian knot to be cut by the Executive Officers of the Powers, *i.e.*, "the admirals commanding their squadrons in the seas of the Levant." Canning was obliged to move warily; but that he himself contemplated the employment of force is clear from the fact that the Duke of Wellington condemned the Treaty of London on the ground that "it specified means of compulsion which were neither more nor less than measures of war."

In August, 1827, the mediation of the three Powers was offered to the "contending parties," was accepted by the Greeks, and refused by the Porte.

The game now passed from the hands of diplomatists into those of sailors. The British fleet in the Levant was under the command of

Sir Edward Codrington. Codrington received his instructions on August 7th; but, not being a diplomatist, he found them difficult of interpretation. How was he "to intercept all ships freighted with men and arms destined to act against the Greeks whether coming from Turkey or the coast of Africa," and, at the same time, prevent his measures from "degenerating into hostilities?" In a word was he, or was he not, to use force? Such was the blunt question which he addressed to our ambassador at Constantinople. Stratford Canning's answer was unequivocal: "the prevention of supplies is ultimately to be enforced, if necessary, and when all other means are exhausted, by cannon shot."

Meanwhile, large reinforcements from Egypt had reached Ibrahim who was still in the Morea; and a squadron of Turkish and Egyptian ships was lying in Navarino Bay. Ibrahim was informed that not a single ship would be allowed to leave the harbour, and on making one or two attempts to do so, he found that the admirals were determined to enforce their orders. Foiled in his attempt at naval operations, and instructed by the Porte to prosecute the war on land with all possible energy, Ibrahim proceeded to execute his orders with merciless severity. All who were found in arms were put to the sword, while the miserable survivors were to be starved into sub-

mission by the total destruction of every means of subsistence. "It is supposed" wrote one eye-witness, Captain Hamilton, "that if Ibrahim remained in the Morea more than a third of its inhabitants would die of absolute starvation." Of the atrocities which were taking place the allied admirals were all but eye-witnesses. "Continual clouds of fire and smoke rising all round the Gulf of Coron bore frightful testimony to the devastation that was going on." The admirals thereupon determined to "put a stop to atrocities which exceed all that has hitherto taken place," and for this purpose to sail into Navarino Bay, and there renew their remonstrances with Ibrahim. No hostilities were intended "unless the Turks should begin." The Turks, however, fired on a boat from the *Dartmouth;* the *Dartmouth* and the French flagship replied; the battle became general; and before the sun went down on October 20, the Turko-Egyptian ships "had disappeared, the Bay of Navarino was covered with their wrecks."

The battle of Navarino did much to clear the diplomatic atmosphere. Unfortunately, before it was fought, the great statesman directly responsible for the policy which led up to it, had passed away.

After Canning's death the direction of the affairs in England fell into the hands of the Duke of Wellington. Wellington never liked

Canning, and strongly disapproved of the later developments of his policy in the Eastern Question. To him and his High Tory colleagues the battle of Navarino, justly described by Lord Althorp as "a necessary consequence of the Treaty of London," was little short of a disaster. In the King's speech it was described as a "collision wholly unexpected by his Majesty," and as "an untoward event;" while his Majesty was made to "lament deeply" that "this conflict should have occurred with the naval forces of an ancient ally;" and to express "a confident hope that this untoward event will not be followed by further hostilities, and will not impede that amicable adjustment of existing difficulties between the Porte and the Greeks to which it is so manifestly their common interest to accede."

Language so fatuous could have but one effect. It encouraged the Porte to persist in conduct which was certain to provoke war with Russia; and it permitted, if it did not compel, Russia to proceed single-handed with the task which she had espoused in common with ourselves. Thus the two main objects of Canning's policy were abandoned; and the results of six years' careful and patient diplomacy were, in a moment of folly, entirely dissipated.

The sequel must be told in a few words. The Porte had the impudence to claim compensation for "the revolting outrage" committed

at Navarino. This was refused; and the ambassadors of the three Powers withdrew from Constantinople. At the end of 1827 the Porte issued a solemn Hatti-Sheriff; summoned the faithful to a holy war against the Infidels; and repudiated the Treaty of Ackermann. Russia's opportunity—the opportunity so long postponed by the wary and astute diplomacy of Canning—had now come. On April 26, 1828, she declared war on Turkey; and, in May, Wittgenstein, at the head of one hundred and fifty thousand men, crossed the Pruth. To the amazement of Europe, the Russian Campaign of 1828 was far from successful, and Metternich was thus encouraged to make one last effort to save the Porte from annihilation. He found no support, even in England, and in 1829 the Russians completed the work they had begun. Wittgenstein was superseded in favour of Diebitsch. Diebitsch, by a masterly march, crossed the Balkans in July, and on August 19 appeared before Adrianople. Adrianople surrendered at once; Kars and Erzeroum had already fallen; and, on September 14, 1829, the Sultan decided to accept the terms embodied in the famous Treaty of Adrianople.

In the history of the Eastern Question the Treaty of Adrianople is inferior in importance only to that of Kainardji—and perhaps to that of Berlin. By its provisions, the local autonomy of Moldavia and Wallachia was confirmed under

Russian guarantee; their Hospodars were to be elected for life instead of for seven years; no Mussulman was to reside in those provinces, and all who possessed landed property were to sell it within eighteen months; Servia also was to be guaranteed in the administration of its internal affairs under similar protection; Russian merchantmen were to have free rights of navigation in the Black Sea, and to be free from all visitation on the part of the Turks, even when in Turkish harbours; Russian traders in Turkey—a singular and enormous privilege—were to be under the exclusive jurisdiction of their own consuls; Russia was to obtain Georgia the other Caucasian provinces and the "great islands of the Danube"; and her frontier on the south-west was to be advanced to the Pruth. Finally, the Porte accepted the Treaty of London in regard to Greece, the settlement of whose affairs were committed to a Conference in London. This Conference subsequently decreed that the new State should be ruled by a "Constitutional Monarchy," and that its frontier should be drawn at a line from the mouth of the river Aspro on the west coast to the Gulf of Volo in the east. This Hellenic kingdom, independent, though circumscribed, may be regarded as the fruit, and the sole fruit, of Canning's unremitting toil; for the Treaty of Adrianople was declared by the Duke of Wellington to be "the death-

blow to the independence of the Ottoman Porte, and the forerunner of the dissolution and extinction of its power." The Duke's prognostication was somewhat premature; but in so far as it was accurate, its fulfilment was due to the diplomatic weakness and timidity of the Duke himself, and to his abandonment of the policy of Canning. Canning was no more friendly to the aggressive advance of Russia than the Duke of Wellington; but he saw clearly that the sooner the contest was ended between Greece and the Porte, the less opportunity would there be for Russia to attain her ends. He held, further, that the legitimate interests of Great Britain in the Eastern Question could be most effectually maintained by a frank understanding with Russia and, if it might be, with the other Powers. So long as he lived, Russia was not permitted to regard the Eastern Question as one to be decided between herself and the Porte, or to pose as the sole defender of oppressed and unemancipated nationalities. His death left the path open to Russia, and the Treaty of Adrianople was the result.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRIME MINISTER.

CANNING'S reputation must rest upon his Foreign policy. I have, therefore, in this essay, concentrated almost exclusive attention upon his tenure of the Foreign Office from 1807–1809, and again from 1822–1827. But a few words must be added here as to the events which were crowded into the last few months of his life.

On February 17, 1827, Lord Liverpool was seized with a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered sufficiently to allow him to take any further part in political life. He died on December 4, 1828. Lord Liverpool was not a great man, but he was an admirable Prime Minister. During fifteen difficult and eventful years he presided over his colleagues with dignity and success. It was said of him with truth by an American minister to the Court of St. James' that if he was not the ablest man in his Cabinet "he was essentially its head." To find a successor to him was no easy matter. No other living statesman could be expected to hold together a

Cabinet composed of such discordant elements, or to postpone a decision on the most pressing of domestic problems—that presented by the Catholic claims.

Of Lord Liverpool's colleagues Canning was, of course, incomparably the ablest; but his Catholic sympathies were not popular in the country, his position in the House of Commons was far from strong, and to the Dukes * in the Upper House his name and his policy were anathema. But, despite his unpopularity, no ministry could have survived at this time without him, and in no ministry would he accept any place except the first. Next to Canning the two most powerful men in Liverpool's Cabinet were Peel and the great Duke; in some respects, of course, they were more powerful than their rival. Canning was acutely conscious alike of his personal claims and of his isolation in his own party. "The language of the Tory party," wrote Fremantle in 1824, "is universal and undisguised abuse of Canning." Canning knew it; and on being consulted by the King advised his Majesty to form an Anti-Catholic Ministry, in which, of course, Canning would have no place. The King, however, declined to part with Canning, and, through Peel, suggested that they should both serve under the Duke. Canning objected to "the

* A remonstrance against Canning's appointment as Prime Minister was signed by eight Dukes and presented to the King.

superinduction of an Anti-Catholic First Minister over his head, and, on April 10, 1827, the King commissioned him to form a ministry. The Anti-Catholics refused to join him, and the resignation of the Duke of Wellington was followed by that of Peel, Lord Westmoreland, Lord Bathurst, and Lord Melville. Canning was thus compelled to look for general support to the Whigs, though Lord Lansdowne was the only prominent Whig included in the new Cabinet. Canning himself became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; Copley (raised to the peerage as Lord Lyndhurst) succeeded Eldon as Lord Chancellor; F. Robinson (created Lord Goderich) went to the Colonial Office; Lord Dudley to the Foreign Office; Sturgess Bourne to the Home Office; Palmerston, retaining the Secretaryship at War, was admitted for the first time into the Cabinet: the Duke of Portland became Privy Seal, and Lord Harrowby, Lord Bexley, Huskisson and Wynn retained their former offices. Lord Lansdowne, at first without a portfolio, brought up the number of Canning's Cabinet to twelve.

Canning was in very bad health when he became Prime Minister, and the worries incidental to Cabinet making did not tend to improve it; but he managed to struggle with increasing difficulty through the Session. On July 2, a Session remarkable for nothing except the dis-

play of bitter personal animosities was brought to a close. Canning sought rest and change at the Duke of Devonshire's villa at Chiswick, but on Sunday, August 5, the public was informed of his serious illness, and three days later, on August 8, they learned that the Prime Minister was dead. On August 16 he was buried in the Abbey in a grave close to that of his master, Pitt. That Canning was ever "popular" in the ordinary sense is not true; but his death, after only four months of power as Prime Minister, created a sensation almost tragic, and his funeral, though technically private by the urgent desire of his friends, was witnessed by a vast and deeply sympathetic concourse. "All our kindly feelings, all our respect for intellectual power, all our admiration of high and successful exertion," wrote a contemporary, "join in calling forth almost involuntary regrets, that one who has just earned a splendid and hard-earned prize should be snatched from it for ever when he has scarcely been allowed to grasp it. . . . Europe lost in him the ablest statesman, and the Commons of England the finest orator of his day."

A large subscription was raised for the purpose of erecting a monument to his name, and a peerage was conferred upon his widow by the King.

This essay is concerned with Canning as a statesman rather than with Canning as a man;

but it is right to add that in all the private relations of life he was exemplary. Though separated from his mother in early boyhood, he was, throughout life, a dutiful and devoted son, and incurred not a little odium on her behalf. Exceptionally fortunate in marriage, he was an affectionate and considerate husband and a good father.

Canning's place in the history of English statesmanship I have already attempted to define. He stands, somewhat curiously, midway between the eighteenth century and the nineteenth. As regards domestic policy, he belongs to the former; as regards foreign policy, to the latter. Like a true disciple of Pitt, he was a genuine believer in Reform; but it was Reform of the eighteenth-century, the pre-revolutionary type. Such enthusiasm as it professed, was derived from *à priori* philosophical speculation, not from democratic fervour or the doctrine of the rights of man. Reform of this type was the gift of enlightened kings and statesmen bestowed upon ignorant, reluctant and frequently obstructive peoples. Few countries in Europe escaped the influence of this movement. In the Empire, Joseph II.; in France, Turgot; in Prussia, Frederick II.; in Russia, Catherine II.; in Spain, Charles III. and D'Aranda; Pombal in Portugal; Struensee in Denmark; all alike were attempting in the spirit of enlightenment to benefit the

people by wide-reaching reforms. Canning was an eminent disciple of this school. With Wilberforce he favoured the abolition of slavery; with Huskisson he promoted fiscal reform; on currency questions he was not only eminently "correct," but exceptionally clear-headed*; above all, he was really zealous for Catholic Emancipation. It was characteristic of the man and of his school that he was strongly opposed to an extension of the Parliamentary franchise, or to any "tampering" with the existing distribution of seats. Pitt's attitude on this question was exceptional. The eighteenth century Reformers, as a rule, understood "Freedom" rather in the negative sense of "absence of restraint," than as positive participation in the active rights of citizenship. "Everything for the people, nothing by the people," was a maxim no less characteristic of them than of the paternal despots of a somewhat earlier period. Canning shared to the full the prejudice, not uncommon among men of exceptional intellectual brilliancy, against committing the delicate machinery of Government into untrained hands. But, in truth, Canning was not greatly interested in questions of domestic administration, with the exception of that of Catholic Emancipation; and his zeal for this measure was inherited from his master, Pitt.

* Cf. *Quarterly Review*, No. 8 (Nov. 1810), an article upon the Bullion Committee by G. Ellis, Canning and Huskisson.

It is one more instance of the waywardness of his political fortunes that the one measure of domestic reform on which he felt strongly, should have been carried into legislative effect, within two years of his own death, by the most bitter and inveterate of his personal opponents, by the very man who prevented the formation of a Tory administration under his leadership.

But almost the whole of Canning's official life was spent at the Foreign Office; and it is on the impulse and direction which he gave to our foreign policy that his reputation must stand or fall. As a Foreign Minister, Canning belongs emphatically to the nineteenth century. During his tenure of office under the Duke of Portland (1807–1809) he gave a taste of his quality, but his energies were necessarily concentrated upon the struggle with Napoleon, and his efforts were hampered and neutralised by incompetent colleagues. Not until his accession to power, in 1822, had he full opportunity to display his genius for foreign policy on a sufficient scale. In a sense, larger, perhaps, than he understood, he called a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old. His rivals and contemporaries among the statesmen of Europe belonged to the old era; he himself belonged to the new. It was his conspicuous merit to have perceived and realised that the settlement laboriously

evolved at Vienna could not last; that the diplomatic edifice was built upon a shifting sand; that its basis was a mere negation of forces and ideas which, despite the diplomatists, were bound to have free play. More than this, Canning understood that many of the ideas which had been evoked by the revolutionary upheaval were not in substance and reality destructive, but essentially constructive, tending to edification, not dilapidation. Of these ideas incomparably the most potent was that of nationality. A common creed and a common tongue; a common race and a common history: all this was involved in the pregnant idea of nationality; and this was the force which, contemned and derided at Vienna, which, repressed by the Holy Allies, was destined to assert itself in the coming age as the essentially constructive and conservative element in European politics. Nationality, in fact, has proved to be, in the main, a unifying and consolidating principle in the nineteenth century. This truth Canning intuitively grasped. To his contemporaries he appeared as a friend to revolution. Nothing could be further from the truth. He was a thorough believer in the hierarchical system, social and political, and he desired to maintain the established order. But he perceived much which was hidden from statesmen like Metternich and Alexander, still more from puny despots like Ferdinand VII. and

Bomba; he understood that the old pre-revolutionary order was gone, never to return, and that the international system of Europe must henceforward be based on something better and bolder than negation and repression.

Canning did not give to English foreign policy an entirely new direction. Castlereagh, though lacking in executive vigour, was working on the right lines. But with his firmer grasp and his wider outlook he infused into its administration a new spirit, and won for his country the respect of the Continental Powers in a measure rarely attained before or since. That Great Britain should occupy a commanding place in the councils of Europe was with Canning an article of faith. At the time of his death, in 1827, she enjoyed it beyond dispute.

APPENDIX.

Canning and the *Quarterly Review*.

By the kindness of Mr. Murray, I am enabled to add a note as to Canning's connection with the beginnings of the *Quarterly Review*.

Of the first twelve numbers no less than seven contained articles which were largely inspired, and in part written, by Canning.

No. 2 (May, 1809). *Austrian State Papers*, by Sharon Turner and Canning. Taking as its text the Manifesto of the Archduke Charles to the German people, this article contains an earnest appeal for general support for the Austrian rising of 1809, and the expression of a belief that even "this generation" might witness the overthrow of Napoleon, "the terror of Europe and the scourge of humanity."

No. 3 (August, 1809). Article on *Spanish Affairs*, by G. Ellis and Canning, is a trenchant criticism upon James Moore's attempted vindication of his brother. Incidentally it warmly endorses the policy of J. H. Frere at Madrid and condemns (though temperately and considerately) Moore's retreat.

No. 4 (November, 1809). *Remarks on the State of Parties*, by G. Ellis and Canning, is a brief but scathing review of a pamphlet on the formation of Perceval's administration.

No. 5 (February, 1810). On the *Catholic Claims*, by Canning and George Ellis. Suggested by a volume by Dr. Dingenan, a strong "Protestant" champion, and by a letter from Lord Grenville to the Earl of Fingall. This article contains an admirable Summary of Canning's position on the Catholic Question. Ardently in favour of Catholic Emancipation, he insists that the Catholics must accept conditions—more particularly a Crown veto on the nomination of Bishops.

No. 8 (November, 1810) and No. 9 (February, 1811). Reviews by G. Ellis and Canning (aided as to the first by Huskisson) of pamphlets by Sir John Sinclair on the Currency Question. Sir John Sinclair held the view that incontrovertible paper was the basis of our recent commercial prosperity, and that a resumption of cash payments would be fatal to its continuance. The attack upon the economic heresies of Sir John is at once highly diverting in style and eminently "correct" in substance.

No. 12 (December, 1811) contains an exceedingly mordant review by Canning (perhaps assisted by Ellis) on *Trotter's Memoirs of Charles James Fox.* The review exposes a worthless book, but throws little independent light upon the career of Fox.

No. 38 (July, 1818) contains an elaborate and very valuable article on Brougham's *Committee on Education.* This contribution (inspired by Canning) throws considerable light upon his views on the Education Question, and should be studied with care by all students of Canning's political and social views.

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